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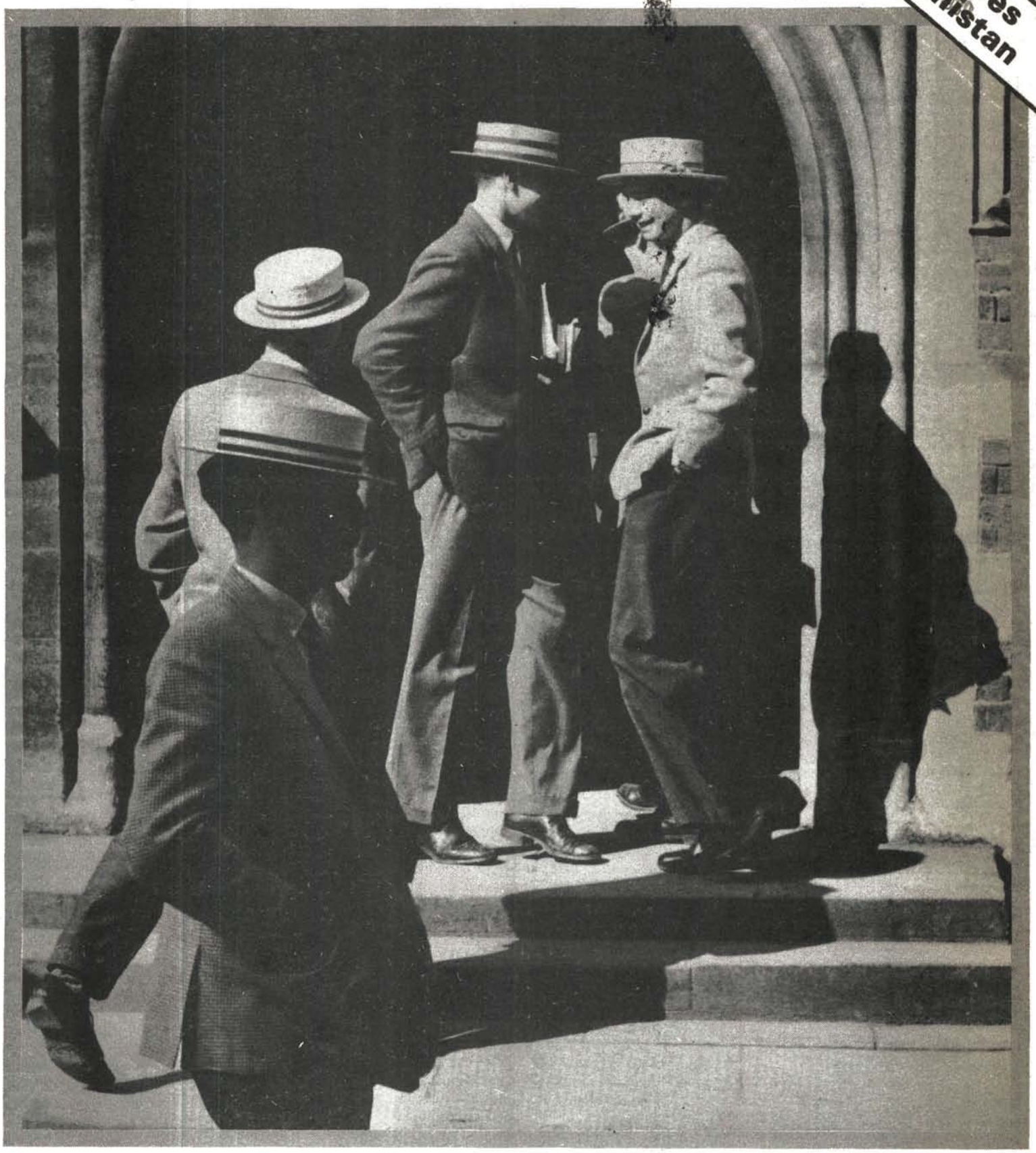
NEW STATESMAN

Manoeuvres in Afghanistan



The public cost of private schools

Bruce George MP: skin-deep democracy

Washington: corruption as usual

Oilgate: whitewash exposed

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NEW STATESMAN
Volume 99 4 January 1980 No 2546

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The future and the Left

IT IS A SAFE prediction that the early years of the new decade will see some frantic copywriting in Whitehall and Tory Central Office. During these years, Mrs Thatcher and her friends will have to find ways of justifying their economic mysticism in terms of the rather crass materialism with which it was sold to the electorate. Indications so far are that the task will not be easy. The national stock of blowsy rhetoric, sophistry and statistical fallacy, already heavily depleted by Wilson and Callaghan, will have to be plundered as never before.

Incumbent authority, of course, never lacks advocates, however grotesque its case. Historians one day will find it comical that a nation whose economy is already sliding into recession should be asked to admire the statesmanship of the solemn asses who apply more lubricant to the slope. But sheer weight of words will probably have some persuasive impact. The temperament involved is universal: it is the one which assures Czechoslovakia that the Soviet tanks are manifestations of socialist friendship, or which used to declare that the industrial system could not survive without child labour.

Therefore, criticism from the Left will need to be careful and specific, as well as animated. It will have to take account of the likeliest, if not quite the most obvious, prognosis for the eighties: which is that the British economy, though seriously weakened, will survive the worst that Thatcher & Co can do to it, and that this will enable the Tories, before some audiences at least, to claim a 'cure'.

THIS 'CURE' will be of the sort obtained by those 18th century doctors who were always opening-up their patients' veins. They knew even less about the bodily system than we do, but were emboldened by their ignorance – so that the extraction of blood appealed to them as a treatment likely to deal with an immense variety of ailments. (Monetarist economists, equally, seem to be boldest when their conception of human structure is at its most naive.)

Many patients survived lengthy bleeding. Some, indeed, were healthier afterwards, and it was easy to believe that those who died were those who had no hope to start with. Practical-minded doctors hastened to credit themselves with results which were actually due to the native resilience of the human body. Only when medical science began systematic comparison between the progress of patients 'treated' and the progress of patients left alone – controlled experiments – did this error in causality begin to recede.

A political economy resembles the human body in several respects, not least of which is our ignorance about how it really works. (The simple economic drives postulated in traditional economic texts have about the same relationship to the actual complexity of human motivation as the Four Humours had to real physiology.) According to circumstance, it has its points of extreme vulnerability, but it is surprisingly difficult to kill outright. Ill-treatment is more likely to enfeeble it in ways which are not immediately obvious, and the symptoms of which are easy to misrepresent.

We have presented in these pages a good deal of evidence which suggests that the Tory government's policies are not just ill-calculated, but are quite likely the exact opposite of that required for the purposes they claim to seek. For instance, there is no particular statistical reason to think that the money-stock controls the price-level, or that massive interest-charges are an efficient, or even plausible means of dealing with inflation. So far from the government borrowing-requirement being overweening, it is probably in real terms quite modest: there *may* be a level of unemployment which would abolish inflation, but only in the sense that sufficiently massive bleeding will abolish a fever, together with the abolition of all other vital signs.

THE VITAL THING for socialist spokesmen and analysts to bear in mind is that the economic picture, at least as it presents itself to the electorate, will not necessarily be self-evident and clear-cut. From the viewpoint of the Left, there can be no doubt about the embittered and destructive nature of Conservative motivations. It does not follow automatically that their practical manifestation will be so apocalyptic that one or two declamatory speeches will be all the requirement for a change of power. Temperamentally, Mrs Thatcher herself might favour some such stark denouncement – but a political society places many checks and balances across the path of such a will. However ferocious credit restrictions are, bankers tend to find ways of lending money to some of their clients. However brutally union rights are attacked, some unionists find ways of defending their jobs. Not even Sir Keith Joseph, when he gets down to it, is able to find arguments in Adam Smith for demolishing all of the public investments which compensate somewhat for the inertia of the British capital market.

To be sure, there could be complete social breakdown. There could be some kind of anti-democratic right-wing putsch – in which case we had best all be clear about which side of the barricades we propose to be found on. But the likelier proposition is that the invincibly foolish spokesmen of British conservatism will be presenting in a few years' time a pale and shaky, but still recognisable patient, with much cunning nonsense about the supposed excellence of his new condition. (Combining, in this case, the role of leech and surgeon, they will have consumed the drained-off blood themselves.)

The Left's requirement, in such a situation, will be a greater degree of expertise in the measurement of symptoms and effects. This is the reason for the NEW STATESMAN's most unpopular cause: advocacy of the need to attempt an economic discourse of extreme detail and precision. It was an insight of Marx's that socialism's future depended upon economics becoming a science. Today, one might quarrel with some of Marx's ideas about the nature of science, but not with the validity of his original connection.

The unpopularity of the argument stems, in part at least, from a suspicion that some kind of computer-based necromancy is to be substituted for the demands of moral sense, or the realitics of class conflict. Truth goes rather the other way: the process begins with the rooting-out from 'economics' that which is really only half-baked morality or ideology,

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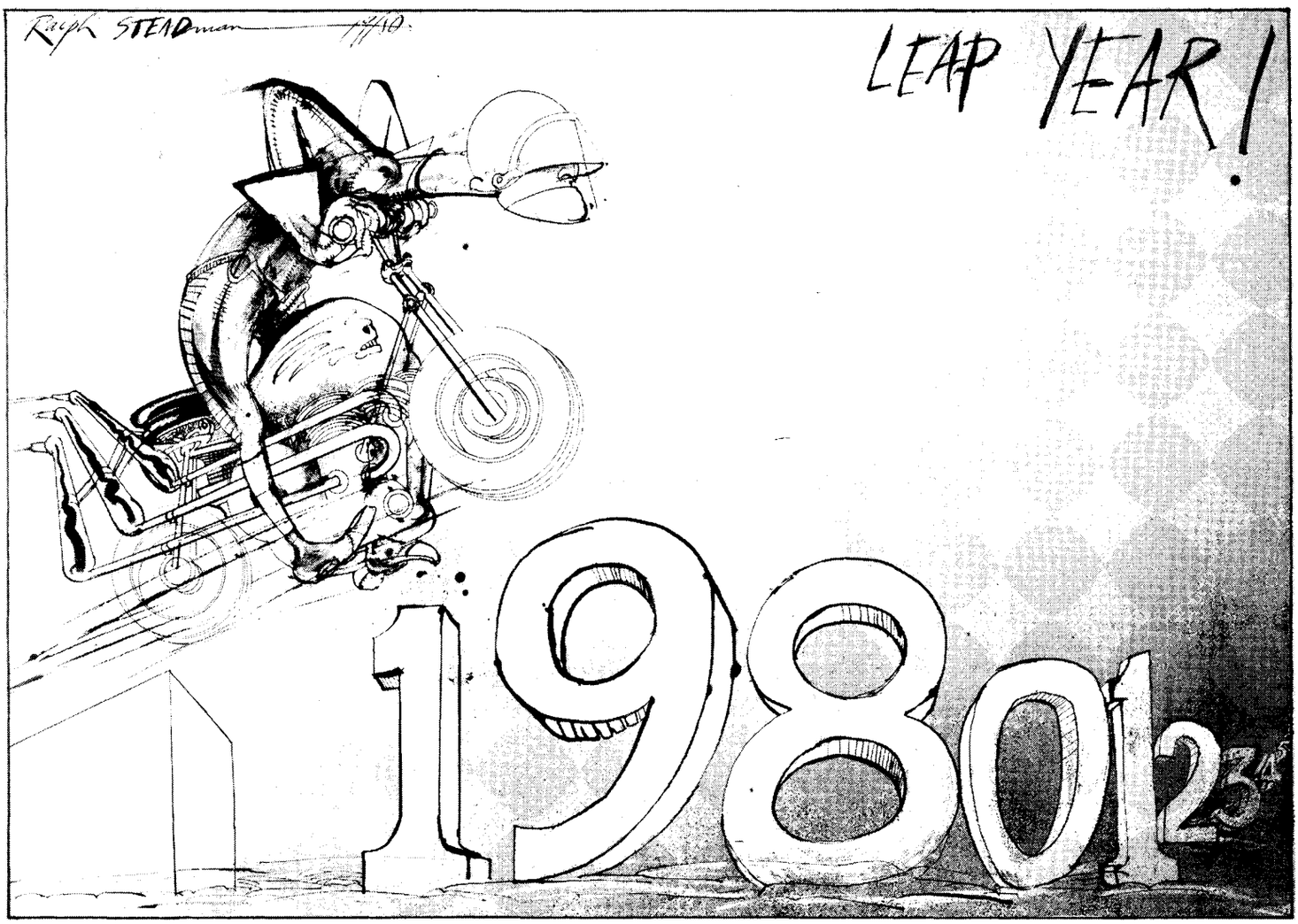

coated with pseudo-scientific camouflage. A fairly straightforward example can be taken from this issue of the NEW STATESMAN: on page 10 Rick Rogers shows that the State's subvention to our 'private' school system runs to some £600 million (or more) every year. The system which, in Tory mythology, is maintained by the toilsome sacrifices of Social Classes I & II is in fact an educational British Leyland, offering its subsidies to those who need it least.

Attempts are made fairly often to justify this system on *economic* grounds: the argument being that greater national wealth accrues long-term from hefty investment in the education of those already educationally privileged. The point which needs to be thrust home is that we have no technique of economic measurement which could come anywhere near justifying such a claim: indeed, it is intrinsically unlikely, given the length and complexity of the human processes involved, that we ever could have. If educational privilege is to be defended, it must be done on moral grounds. And of course, it is the impossibility of that task which promotes the flight into pseudo-economics.

Economics science is the business of comparing alternative models of social action – whether the process is done intuitively, or with formal sophistication – in order that agreed moral purposes may be pursued more efficiently. But the moral purposes must come first: they cannot be extracted solely from the economics.

There will always be pseudo-science so long as there are powerful interests which want to hear (for instance) that enormous income-differentials are merely inevitable, rather than morally offensive. But the underlying difficulty with economics has been its lack of any experimental techniques: anything to compare to the methodology of controls which brought medical biology out of its adolescence.

EXPERIMENTING creates fearsome problems of principle and emotion even when individual doctors deal with individual patients. At the collective level of society at large, 'live' experiments can be contemplated only by those who are too stupid to know what they are doing (like Sir Geoffrey Howe) or too wicked to care (like the Chilean junta). Therefore, if economics is to become useful its task is to find ways round its non-experimental status, by means of mathematical simulation and rigorous analysis of the predictive power of theories. Though it is scarcely headline news, the truth of the matter is that the intellectual techniques required to undertake such work are beginning to become available.

After all Fleet Street's crystal balls have been returned to the pawnshop, there will remain a critical question for the 1980s: whether or not the disparate techniques now used to measure, simulate and analyse social action can be turned into scientifically useful and democratically accountable disciplines. The first signal, already becoming apparent, is a certain humility – the withdrawal of economics and its related sciences from areas in which they have nothing to say. The high point of economistic hubris was surely the remarkable Friedmanite dictum that political freedom dies when a certain proportion of GDP falls within the public sector: again, a moral statement (of dubious value) posing in scientific clothes.

Political freedom is an idea worth dying for, but it is not one which can be usefully modelled on a computer: economic science is likely to make most of its progress during the eighties by sticking to ones which can be, and these include many of the relationships between unemployment, inflation, exchange rates and public borrowing. Limitation of aim, and increased pursuit turning into a science. But if economics is to become a science, where is its intellectual home to be?

The Right, of course, will always prefer leeches and quackery. The problem of the Left is rather different: it once had a love-affair with science, in the radiance of which every problem of human society was expected to dissolve. Disillusion, inevitably, followed the honeymoon.

Disillusion, however, is a luxury which must be dispensed with in the context of a deadly battle to regain the Left's intellectual initiative – painfully built up during the thirties, forties and fifties, and squandered by Labour's leaders during the sixties and seventies.

Science, indeed, has only a limited role in human affairs, but that role becomes effective precisely at the moment when its limitations are acknowledged. During the eighties, the social sciences will begin to undergo this crucial transformation, and the business of the Left will be to master the techniques involved without suffering any loss of moral and emotional commitment.

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AFGHANISTAN
Fred Halliday

Why have the Russians supported a new faction?

Severe problems for the new rulers

THE FACTIONALISM of Afghanistan's recent history not only accounts for the violent deaths of that country's last three Presidents, but is also inscribed in the composition of the very government which the new incumbent, Babrak Karmal, has put together. Babrak himself comes from a well-off family, unlike late Presidents Amin and Taraki who, like most of the members of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party, came from relatively modest provincial backgrounds. Babrak's father was a general in the former king's army, and he first made his name as a student leader of the liberal *Wikh-i Zalmaiyan* or Awakened Youth movement in the late 1940s.

The Awakened Youth were suppressed by the royal family in 1952 and when a small group of intellectuals met to found an opposition party in 1965 their alignment was by this time to the Soviet brand of Marxism. Babrak became a leader of the new party, the PDPA, but within two years it had split into two rival groups: one faction, led by Taraki and Amin, formed the *Khalq* or People tendency. Babrak and his associates formed the *Parcham*, or flag group.

At first Babrak's Parcham met with greater success: they recruited in the armed forces and when the republican coup of 1973 overthrew the king, the new President Daud formed a close alliance with the Parchamites. But although they were allowed to draw up reform measures and encourage closer links with the Soviet Union Daud mistrusted them and by 1975 were once again in the wilderness. There, despite considerable bitterness about alleged persecution of the Khalqi faction when the Parchamites were in power, the two groups reunited.

Their reunion did not long outlast the April 1978 coup which brought the PDPA to power. By the summer of 1978 Babrak had been despatched to exile as ambassador in Prague, and his associates to other embassy posts. But despite later Afghan demands that the Parchamites be sent back to face charges against them, the Russians refused to accede to these requests.

The new cabinet includes several of the top Parcham leaders brought back from exile. Mrs. Anahita Rabtezad, former ambassador in Belgrade, is now minister of education; Abdul Wakil, nominated ambassador to London, is minister of finance. Other Parchamite leaders have been released from jail, among them General Mohammad Rafia, minister of defence, and Sultan Ali Keshtmand, minister of planning. A key figure in the new cabinet is General Abdul-Kader al-Agha. He was the top military representative of Parcham at the time of the 1973 coup, and was a guarantee of Parcham's influence in the new regime – until Daud demoted him to become head of the Kabul abbatoir. He later broke with Parcham, but his arrest on charges of conspiracy in late 1978 coincided with the expulsion of the Parchamite leaders from the PDPA government.

Another group of new ministers are, however, former Khalqis, enemies of Babrak Karmal's who served with President Taraki until his overthrow by Amin in September of last year. These include the Afghan 'Gang of Four', whom Amin accused of having conspired with Taraki to kill him and who fled to the Soviet Union when their conspiracy failed. Assadollah Sarwari, now vice-president, is an airforce officer who headed Aqsa the secret police force after the April 1978 coup. The others are Lieutenant-Colonel Mohammad Aslam Watanjar, a former minister of defence, Mohammad Gulabzoi and Sherjan Mazdooryar.

The inclusion of these Khalqi elements in the new cabinet is probably designed to win over supporters of former President Taraki, and may well reflect Russian influence on Babrak. One significant person not included in the new government is Dastagir Panjsheri, a leading Taraki minister who warned early on in a series of newspaper articles about the dangers of forcing the pace of reform in the conservative countryside. He remains in exile in the Soviet Union, where he fled, along with the 'Gang of Four', in September.

THE RUSSIAN CLAIM that Afghanistan was subjected to a direct aggression by foreign powers is, of course, a fiction; but the Islamic tribal forces in Afghanistan do benefit from substantial foreign assistance. Their base areas lie, unmolested, in Pakistan, and material aid has been provided by China, Iran, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It was precisely the attempt of the urban-based PDPA to introduce reforms into the country-side that provoked the conservative rural resistance, but the scale of this resistance was increased by the extremely brutal way in which the Afghan army and airforce responded from the spring of 1979 onwards. The person most responsible for this response was Hafizullah Amin and this is why the Russians, who at first endorsed his hard line, later decided to remove him. But it will be difficult for the new regime to build popular support. The choice of Assadollah Sarwari as vice-president is a debatable one, given his former role as head of Aqsa, and months of purges have taken their toll of those who might have supported Babrak's administration.

When he came to power in September, Amin arrested up to 4,000 Taraki supporters and most of the army officers among them are believed to have been shot. Few of those Parchamite supporters left behind in the country from the earlier purge are likely to be now available. It is this decomposition of the party and state machines, as much as the force of the Islamic rebellion itself, which explains the scale of the Russian intervention. On top of the immediate military problems, Afghanistan also faces severe economic difficulties: the towns are deprived of the wood they need for heating, and famine threatens.

Christopher Hitchens, Bombay

Cynical election

IN A GENERALLY DISPIRITING and sordid general election – so far conducted without any reference to issues and principles – one encouraging fact stands out like a candle in the encircling gloom. Every single party politician in India is a socialist. True, some are 'national socialists' like Mrs Gandhi's party, but even she goes around saying that she thought of socialism first, and practically inherited it from her father. There is the Janata coalition, comprising the rabidly chauvinist Hindu Jan Sangh. This umbrella campaign fights to retain a loosening grip on power by calling for 'socialism, secularism and democracy'. Even the Communist Party talks about socialism, though in rather muted tones.

India's misfortune has been that the vast people's movement against the Gandhi regime in 1977 was dissipated in smoke filled rooms by corrupt and ancient placemen. Their performance in office has been so poor and so self-seeking that there has been a swing to what might be called 'emergency nostalgia' among the voters – a feeling that in the old days at least the trains ran on time. Mrs Gandhi is an astute demagogue, and her slogan about 'order and discipline' (which very often replaces the one about socialism and democracy) is designed to catch just this mood. Her success in meetings and opinion surveys has so alarmed her enemies that the Communist Party (Marxist), the second largest force on the left, has opened sympathetic relations with the palsied reactionaries of the current Lok Dal caretaker government – itself a splinter of the Janata coalition.

Indian voters, disgusted with the defections from one party to the other, with the obvious money game played in New Delhi, with the pork-barrel inducements to different provincial governments and the appeal to caste and regional differences, are being written up in the Indian and foreign press as if they did not care. While it is true – as the swing back to Mrs Gandhi indicates – that they are pretty cynical, it would be a mistake to underestimate their maturity. The likeliest result is still one which gives no mandate to any one gang of politicians over another.

Mrs Gandhi, with her highly developed taste for absolute power, is still fighting for a clear majority. There is almost nothing she will not do. She has secured the endorsement of some leading Islamic figures, as well as bidding for the continued support of the Hindu Brahmin caste from which she springs. She has even hastily redecorated and donated an unwanted Congress Party building in Calcutta to the bizarre figure of Mother Theresa – whose teachings on birth control run rather at odds with her son's view on forcible castration, but whose Christian supporters in the leftist city might come in handy. She is contesting the election from two seats, just to be on the safe side, one in the south and one in the north, in her Medak constituency. It has just been announced there will be separate polling booths for 'untouchables'. Nothing is left to chance.

Mrs Gandhi has some grounds for optimism. In 1977, after all, it was not so much the Congress vote which fell as the opposition vote which united. Now that the coalition which beat her has fallen into warring communal groups she wears the glassy 'I told you so' look of the beaten politician making her comeback. She has still to make any admission about the crimes committed by her supporters during the emergency. This fanatical self-esteem gives energy to her otherwise divided opponents.

In the background, rural poverty and indebtedness are on the increase and provision of health and education facilities is falling almost as fast. While inflation of the price of basic staples is a general talking point, the country's international position is uncertain, with events in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran making a strong impact on India's religious and political patchwork. Almost daily allegations in the press about foreign interference in the elections have added to the febrile and confused atmosphere in which voting is taking place. The false antithesis between 'democracy' on the one hand and 'efficiency and order' on the other is no more than a squabble between two groups of politicians – one set incompetent, the other authoritarian. Will the Indian electorate see through the choice? They have been written off prematurely in the past.

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Why we shouldn't forget Oilgate

The government announced shortly before Christmas that it wishes to close the book on the sanctions-busting scandal. The Establishment has closed ranks in a concerted effort to protect the oil company executives, civil servants and politicians who made a mockery of the Rhodesian oil embargo. What is particularly disturbing is the way in which the authorities have employed legal arguments to justify what is essentially a political decision. Indeed the very timing of the Attorney-General's statement on 19 December, just two days before the formal signing of the Rhodesian constitutional agreement, suggests that political considerations were paramount. Here MARTIN BAILEY, who broke the story in the NEW STATESMAN in 1978, and has covered it for us ever since, explains why the government's arguments are phoney, and why Oilgate does still matter.

New Statesman 30 June 1978

Rhodesia: Sanctions busters' secrets revealed

Oil has kept Rhodesia going since UDI in 1965. Here **Martin Bailey** and **Bernard Rivers** show how it was done and how a British company owned by Shell and BP must have known about it

The current civil war in Rhodesia – with all its atrocities – is an inevitable result of the stubborn continuation of

From left to right: Sir Frank McFadzean, ex-managing director of Shell, the late William Fraser (Lord Strathalmond), boss of BP, George (now Baron) Thomson, Commonwealth Secretary, Sir Harold Wilson, Lord Greenhill, the government's man on the BP board since 1973 and Ian Smith.

...documentation ...wealth Shipping, and ...ean Transport and Trading – have also had a significant stake in Freight Services at ... decade

...plicitly stated that the oil had been purchased by Freight Services from Shell, and that it was to be taken to Rhodesia. However, before the customs officials would break the ... oil storage tanks and

New Statesman 7 July 1978

Sanctions busting: the cover-up

Martin Bailey and **Bernard Rivers** show how government statements about sanctions – often based on advice from the oil companies – were seriously misleading.

The failure of oil sanctions has been a chronicle of disaster. Last week we showed how the oil companies sabotaged sanctions by supplying the rebel regime through the use of intermediaries. This week we show how the British government was unprepared to impose oil sanctions, whatever they said in public: how government officials knew that sanctions were being broken, but the government in London did nothing, and how the oil companies account of what was going on fell far short of what they knew. As a result the British parliament and the United Nations got a quite false impression of the extent of san... Britain introdu... ...sing ...harge against five weeks On 11 Harold ...ident

...ported that Shell, Caltex, and Mobil were building a new 100,000 gallon depot at Nesina, ten miles South of the Beitbridge border.

Robert Good has revealed that after the first reports came through of this road traffic, the officers of the British Embassy in Pretoria were 'incredulous' and they discounted these stories in their dispatches to London. Embassy officials subsequently mounted a round-the-clock surveillance at Beitbridge from a parked car a few yards from the border gate. An HMG spokesman told journalists that reports of a substantial flow of oil ... were 'clearly very highly ...missed the point ... once ...decided to allow some ...hodesia, there was ...

...of one of the major forwarding companies involved in sanctions-busting (though not of oil); he often had to ask permission to use their xerox machine.

The involvement of the oil companies in helping to break sanctions is confirmed in a book which is to be published in English later this month: *Sanctions Double Cross*, by Jorge Jardim, who helped coordinate the supply of oil to Rhodesia. He claims that in December 1966 the South African subsidiaries of Shell and BP joined Total, Mobil, and Caltex in sending oil products by tanker to Lourenço Marquez, and then on by rail into Rhodesia.

T... scheme involved the active partici... of Shell-Mozambique, which was ... Britain. In December 1967 – ... the Lourenço Marques re... ...ed by Shell and ... ad offices

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No action over breaching of Rhodesia oil sanctions

There were bitter exchanges in the Commons yesterday after the Attorney General said there were to be no prosecutions relating to breaches of the oil sanctions surrounding Southern Rhodesia from 1969. He also said that there were to be no further investigations into these matters.

Bitter exchanges in House after ruling

By Hugh Noyes
Parliamentary Correspondent, Westminster

Angry and bitter exchanges followed the announcement in the Commons yesterday by Sir Michael Havers, QC, the Attorney General, that there are to be no prosecutions and no further investigations as a result of the Bingham report relating to breaches of the sanctions order allowing oil and petroleum to reach Southern Rhodesia from 1965 onwards.

It was soon clear that the decision and consternation over this decision was felt by many Conservative MPs as well as by ... Labour and Liberal benches.

... Sir Michael em... the decis... by ...

subject, said Mr Steel, then that should be declared as a political rather than a legal decision.

Mr Gordon Wilson, for the Scottish National Party, said that coming on the heels of the Bhutto affair, it must now be believed that if Mr Nixon had been head of State in the United Kingdom, sheltered by the establishment, he would have got off scot free.

Mr Robert Hughes, (Labour, Aberdeen North) added that Sir Michael ... clear that under Bri... the crime ... of genu... Amer... Philip...

How the sanctions scandal was revealed (left) and, eighteen months later, how the government closed the book on the affair.

ON 19 DECEMBER 1979 the Attorney-General, Sir Michael Havers, rose in the House of Commons to read a carefully-prepared statement in which he announced that the Director of Public Prosecutions had decided not to press charges of sanctions-busting against Shell and BP. The DPP had 'reached the conclusion that further investigation and public expenditure would not be justified and the matter should proceed no further.' As jeers erupted from the Labour benches Sir Michael added that he agreed with the DPP's decision. Let us examine the six arguments used by the Attorney-General.

● FIRST, the Bingham investigation had, the AG claimed, been 'wholly insufficient for the purposes of a criminal trial', and 'direct evidence by witnesses or from proved documents would be needed' to bring the case to the courts. What the AG did not disclose was that Bingham had handed over several filing cabinets full of 'direct evidence by witnesses' and 'proved documents'. Bingham obtained formal testimony from forty witnesses, including most of the key oil company executives, and these interviews were carefully transcribed by an outside team (Harry Counsell and Co.) and sent to the witnesses concerned for checking. In addition Bingham received vast quantities of documentation direct from Shell and BP (which were therefore presumably 'proved' documents). This material was carefully analysed and then handed on to the DPP. Obviously further police inquiries would have been needed before Shell and BP could have been brought to court. But it is difficult to understand why the Bingham investigation had been 'wholly insufficient' for legal purposes.

● SECONDLY, the AG argued that after the 1968-69 meetings between the oil companies and Lord Thomson it would be difficult to determine whether direct supplies to Rhodesia had been made 'in contravention of the alleged "understanding" with HMG'. This rather obscure remark refers to the Total swap arrangement which operated from 1968 until 1971.

The legal position regarding the Total swap is debatable – although when it was first introduced the oil companies themselves feared that it might breach the Sanctions Order. But, in any case, the swap arrangement operated for less than three years: before it (from 1966 to 1968) and after it (from 1972 to 1976) Shell Mozambique handled direct supplies to Rhodesia. Thus the fact that it might be difficult to prosecute for the 1968-71 period is not an argument for taking no action over the earlier and later periods.

● THIRDLY, the AG resurrected the argument used by Shell and BP that 'many of the companies and their officials were subject to the laws of the states deeply hostile to the sanctions policy.' This was true, to different degrees, in Rhodesia and South Africa, but in Mozambique there was no law which obliged firms to engage in sanctions-busting. Yet for much of the period after UDI Shell Mozambique (which was registered in London) was handling half of Rhodesia's oil.

● FOURTHLY, the AG claimed that 'many of the principal officials concerned in the contraventions of the Sanctions Orders were not amenable to our jurisdiction.' But many oil company executives *were* under British jurisdiction. Moreover, it seems a strange argument to suggest that *no one* should be prosecuted for a crime simply because *some* of those involved happened to be outside UK jurisdiction. The AG also pointed out that some of the people involved had 'since died'. True, but one might add that if legal action had been initiated back in the 1960s there would have been fewer fatalities on the Shell and BP staff. In fact, however, there are only three key British oil company executives involved in the story who have died (Robert Dummett, Hugh Feetham and Lord Strathalmond).

The AG added that some people 'who appear to have been at the very centre of operations' have retired. Fear of the libel law makes me reluctant actually to name names. But very few of the British citizens centrally involved have retired. Rather more of them appear to have been promoted up the BP and Shell hierarchies. It also seems a bizarre argument to say that if a criminal has 'retired' then charges should not be laid. As the *Guardian* asked in an editorial: 'Will the Yorkshire Ripper, when caught, decide that the years are telling on him and that unfortunately he can no longer play an active part in public affairs?' Or as Robin Maxwell-Hyslop MP (a Tory, be it noted) asked: 'Is this same doctrine to apply to burglars, that if they have retired there is immunity from prosecution?' Sir Michael Havers, unable to defend his position, chose to abuse his colleague instead: 'I regret that my honourable friend treats what I consider to be a serious matter in a light-hearted way.' Yet the point of principle made by Mr Maxwell-Hyslop is, of course, a perfectly serious one – and one which, it might be thought, ought to be of some interest to a party pledged to the 'rule of law'.

● FIFTHLY, and here we get to the heart of the matter, the AG pointed out that if Shell and BP were taken to court, the defence 'would investigate the entire history of events from 1966'. He added that 'those events would cast their shadow over the whole case'. and a jury would be unlikely to convict if the oil companies could show that 'their conduct had the express or ostensible consent of the authorities.' In other words a court case would reveal embarrassing evidence of complicity by civil servants and ministers which might make it difficult to convict the oil companies.

● SIXTHLY, and lastly, the AG pointed out that further police investigations would have

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taken four more years, and the case itself might last a further twelve months. Part of the reason for the delay was the fact that 14,000 files, containing 250,000 papers, had been obtained from the oil companies. Shell and BP had succeeded in drowning the police in paper. But it is still surprising to hear that there was *too much* documentary evidence for a case to go to court.

The claim that it would take four years to assemble the evidence is presumably based on the assumption that police inquiries would have been pursued with little vigour. During the period when the Bingham report was under consideration by Scotland Yard's fraud squad, only two detectives worked on the case, and there seemed to be a marked lack of urgency on the part of the authorities. More staff would have speeded up the inquiry. Again, comparisons with the Yorkshire Ripper case are interesting: over the past year hundreds of detectives have been involved in attempting to track down one particularly brutal criminal.

SIR MICHAEL HAVERS'S legal arguments for closing the Oilgate file are bizarre. As Frank Dobson MP complained: 'The decision he and the DPP have come to is a disgrace to our system of government and to our judicial system.' Dobson has also called for the release of the unpublished Annex III of the Bingham Report on 'Evidence of Criminal Offences'. Back in September 1978 publication of this annex had been withheld at the request of the DPP 'while matters covered by the report are under consideration by him.' Now that the DPP has dropped the case, Dobson argued, Annex III should be released immediately 'otherwise it will be just one more stage in the cover-up'.

The Oilgate scandal has not been completely buried with the decision not to prosecute. Last February the House of Commons voted overwhelmingly for a Parliamentary inquiry into the government's handling of the Rhodesian oil embargo. One week later, however, the motion establishing a Special Commission of Inquiry was thrown out by the House of Lords. Since then Labour backbenchers have continued to press for a full investigation into the sanctions story.

On 20 December, the day after the Attorney General's statement on prosecutions, the Prime Minister was again asked about the Special Commission. Mrs Thatcher replied that 'it is not our intention to go ahead with any further inquiry.' The Rhodesian ceasefire agreement, she added, should be 'a time of reconciliation.'

It is difficult to see how a British Parliamentary inquiry into the oil sanctions story could possibly endanger the prospect of reconciliation in Rhodesia. The African population of Rhodesia would presumably welcome an investigation into why Britain failed to end UDI 'within weeks rather than months'. Both Bishop Muzorewa and the Patriotic Front campaigned for tighter sanctions, after all, and the only difference between them on this was whether sanctions should have been lifted in March 1978 or December 1979. The white community in Rhodesia now hardly cares about the issue.

BUT the case for a parliamentary inquiry into Oilgate is more concerned with matters rather closer home. Britain's two largest companies manipulated civil servants; civil servants withheld vital information from their ministers; ministers did not place all the facts before Cabinet; a sucession of Prime Ministers claim to have been kept completely uninformed; and Parliament was given incorrect and misleading information on a vital aspect of Britain's most important foreign policy issue of the time.

When the House of Commons reassembles on 14 January Labour MPs are likely to demand a debate on the government's decision to turn down an inquiry. Backbenchers are hardly likely to be convinced by the argument of the Leader of the House that a Parliamentary inquiry into Oilgate would merely 'cause embarrassment when peace is coming to Rhodesia.' The purpose of the proposed inquiry is to probe our system of government – and try to learn from what went wrong.

AMATEURISM

Skin-deep democracy

The House of Commons Defence and External Affairs sub-committee, which was supposed to monitor all Britain's defence and foreign policies, spent precisely £1,600 on specialist advice and assistance last year. BRUCE GEORGE MP, who is a member of the new Select Committee on Defence, and KARL PIERAGOSTINI, his research assistant, argue that Britain will continue to have only 'a thin veneer of democracy' as long as we believe that the country can be run solely by gifted amateurs.

A LEAKED CABINET paper on the PWR has precipitated calls for a full Commons debate on Britain's nuclear energy policy. The Government's secret manoeuvres on strategic and tactical nuclear weapons have promoted cries that Parliament is yet again being circumvented. And the recent rows over selection of members for the House of Commons select committees have focused attention on the purpose and control of these new bodies. These rumblings are all the result of long standing frustrations felt by back bench Members of Parliament too often treated as rubber stamps or cranks who must be tolerated.

This is not to say that all back benchers are champing at the bit for more responsibility. That is far from the truth. The image of a part-time but gifted amateur and generalist politician is still attractive to many MPs, and the procedures of parliamentary work encourage that outdated view. Tinkering with parliamentary institutions during the past hundred years has amounted to very little substantive change. The House of Commons of today is essentially a creature of the 19th century. The executive has continued to dominate so completely that (as Professor John Griffith has argued) legislation seems to be more a function of the executive than of the legislature itself.

This is, of course, but part of a much broader problem: the shallowness of democratic control in Britain. If one takes the number of citizens represented by each *full-time* democratically elected representative and compares Britain with other established democracies, the results are startling. In West Germany there is one representative for about every 33,000 people. The United States and Australia have one for every 29,000 or so, while in Sweden there is one elected politician for each 9,700 Swedes. In Britain (where we make the generous assumption of 635 *full-time* MPs), the figure is one for every 88,000. With such a thin veneer of democracy, it is doubly important that the representatives we do have are given the tools to perform effectively.

RECENT HOPES that the rot has been arrested are largely pinned on the Commons' new select committees. For twenty years academics and parliamentarians have been discussing the issue, always looking wistfully over their shoulder at things across the Atlantic. Our comparatively modest foray into investigative committees was approved in July, but has only just got off the ground. Now that the conflict over selection has been resolved, a crucial question remains: what is to be the level of staff support for these bodies? They would do a great disservice if they gave the appearance of democratic scrutiny without the reality of it. And this is precisely what can happen if adequate, professional and independent research support is denied them. This support should come from the combined talents of MPs' personal staff, House of Commons Library researchers, and assistance (either full or part time) to each committee. In all three areas past experience provides little hope.

A Member of Parliament is expected to employ all his personal staff assistants from an allowance of £4,600 per year. This is about the going rate in London for one good secretary. The comparison with American legislators is quite laughable. Members of the House of Representatives are authorised nearly £120,000 a year (in addition to their own salaries) to employ up to 18 members of staff. In the Senate each member is authorised staff expenses based on the population of his state. This ranges from just over £200,000 a year for the least populous states to over £400,000 for New York and California. And there is no restriction on the number of staff a Senator might employ.

COMPARISON with the American system is useful but only up to a point. US legislators are required to play, through their extensive committee system, an active role in the close scrutiny, formulation and passage of legislation. Back bench Members of the House of Commons, on the other hand, have formal power with very little influence. The analogy of the West German Bundestag may seem fairer. Even here the British MP is totally outclassed in support financing. In addition to £36,000 a year salary (over one third of which

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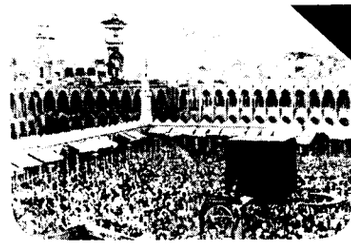
Twenty one programmes for the New Year from London Weekend Television.

Agatha Christie's WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK EVANS ? The picture shows Francesca Annis and Sir John Gielgud.



ISLAM looks at a religion that could change the world.

The Prime Minister talks to Brian Walden on Weekend World - 12 noon, this Sunday.

PIG IN THE MIDDLE, a new comedy series starring Dinsdale Landen, Liza Goddard and Joanna Van Gysegham.

ENEMY AT THE DOOR, a second series about life in the Channel Islands during the German occupation.

WEEKEND WORLD, LWT's current affairs programme, presented by Brian Walden on Sunday at Noon.

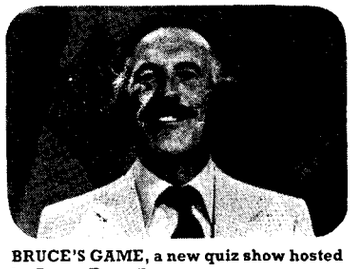
BRIAN MOORE MEETS NIKI LAUDA, a portrait of one of Grand Prix Racing's greatest Champions.

SKIN, a series of programmes about immigrant communities in the London area.

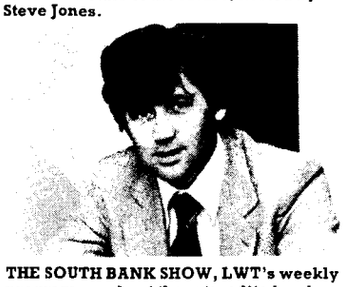
SEARCH FOR A STAR, television's newest talent show, searching for the television stars of the future, hosted by Steve Jones.

WORLD OF SPORT, produced by LWT every Saturday for the ITV network and introduced by Dickie Davies.

CREDO, LWT's current affairs programme on religious and moral issues.



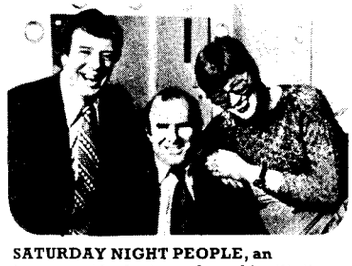
BRUCE'S GAME, a new quiz show hosted by Bruce Forsyth.



THE SOUTH BANK SHOW, LWT's weekly programme about the arts, edited and presented by Melvyn Bragg.

THE BIG MATCH, London's Sunday afternoon soccer, with number one soccer commentator Brian Moore.

AGONY, a second series of the off beat comedy about an agony columnist trying to solve her own as well as other people's problems.



SATURDAY NIGHT PEOPLE, an irreverent look at people and institutions with Russell Harty, Clive James and Janet Street-Porter.

DOCTORS AND NURSES, an original comedy series featuring a hospital staffed by children, treating grown-up patients.

LOOK HERE, a monthly look at broadcasting itself, presented by John Pardoe, in which London viewers can air their views.

POLICE FIVE, produced in association with New Scotland Yard and introduced by Shaw Taylor.

THE FAITH BROWN CHAT SHOW : the star from Who Do You Do ? impersonates a host of stars in her own series.

GAY LIFE, a series exploring issues which affect the homosexual community in the London area.

THE LONDON PROGRAMME, the current affairs programme for the London area, introduced by Godfrey Hodgson.

LWT
London Weekend Television

Programmes made by London Weekend Television, the ITV station for the London area on-air every weekend from 7pm Friday until closedown on Sunday.

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is untaxed) each Member of the German lower house is allowed just over £13,400 a year for staff. This allowance amounts to roughly what a British MP receives in salary and secretarial allowance combined. It's no wonder that MPs in Britain have jumped at the chance to use the research abilities of unpaid American students who come here to study the British parliamentary system first hand.

Looking to the experience of the House of Commons Library provides little comfort. Until 1960 the Research Division of the Library consisted of 2 officers, 2 statisticians and a couple of secretaries. Things have improved since then, with the division now consisting of 36 people; but only 20 of them are actually designated as 'research specialists'. A 1975 report by the Select Committee on Assistance to Private Members recommended doubling the Research Division. The report was never debated in the House, nor has there ever been a formal Government statement on it. In the four years following the report the staff was increased by 50 per cent. But this was in the face of an 83 per cent increase in workload. In other words, things became even worse. The Library is staffed by capable and hard working people who have been denied the resources and numbers necessary to do effectively the job they should be doing for back bench Members. The result has been an emasculation of the voters' representatives.

To our Library's 20 research specialists Australia has more than 30, Canada 45, West Germany 71 and the US more than 500. If one takes the research specialist per 100 Members for the British, Canadian, West German, Australian and US legislatures, the figures are 3.1, 12.2, 13.1, 16 and 94 respectively. We are simply not in the same league.

Having established that MPs cannot afford to hire full-time research assistants and that the House of Commons Library is grossly understaffed, we can look to what research assistance is likely to be available to the new Commons committees themselves. While no final decision on staff levels has been made, one can get an idea of what is likely by looking at previous select committees.

TO BEGIN with, in the last two years (and probably before then as well) there were no full-time specialist advisers appointed to any of the Commons select committees. During the 1978-79 Session a total of 25 part-time advisers were consulted by the committees having the power to appoint them (three of the nine committees with such power declined to use it at all). The mere 939 days of specialist advice in '78-'79 cost the country a total of just over £27,000.

In the West German Bundestag the committees have assigned specifically to them more than 90 full-time specialist researchers from their Library. The United States Senate Committee on Appropriations, consisting of 28 members, has a full-time staff of 53 advisers/researchers/managers plus an additional 25 secretarial or clerical workers.

How well equipped were the old Commons committees? The Defence and External Affairs subcommittee of the Expenditure Committee (D & EA) had the task of monitoring all Britain's defence and foreign policies: as one of the more active, influential and respected of the old committees, it was supported by the full-time services of two Commons clerks, two accountants, a secretary and specialist assistance from four part-time advisers. In 1978-9, the latter item cost the Exchequer about £1,600. That is roughly .00002 per cent of the defence budget. During its entire nine-year life the D & EA received a total of only 385½ days of specialist advice. The Commons' new Select Committee on Defence will probably begin work with the support of two clerks, a secretary and, at best, *one* accountant. It has been denied the power to appoint subcommittees.

Right at the other end of the spectrum, the two committees in the US Senate which oversee defence and foreign affairs (Armed Services and Foreign Relations with their 13 subcommittees) have staffs which together total more than 90; in the House of Representatives the corresponding two committees (Armed Services and Foreign Affairs with their 16 subcommittees) employ more than 120 people. Of course, the Americans' attitude to staffs (like their attitude to so much else) brings to mind Evita's cry of 'all I want is a whole lot of excess'. But that should not deter us from moving towards more sensible staffing in Britain. The romantic notion of leaving things to a few amateur generalists is an indulgence we can ill afford in today's world. Parliament will not break out of its Victorian straight-jacket unless the recurring calls for greater specialisation (like those in the Fulton Report on the Civil Service and the more recent Berrill Report on overseas representation) are heeded. Some committee members have argued that specialist assistance is not required at all – a ludicrous view if the committees are to do more than make ill-informed accusations or sycophantic noises.

EVEN THE MEAGRE level of current in-house staff assistance is fettered. It is disturbing to hear rumours of clerks being moved from servicing particular select commitees because they came to learn too much about the subject and began suggesting penetrating and awkward questions. As to assistance from outside Whitehall, in the past the D & EA relied on the solicited but unpaid expertise of various academics (this in addition to poorly paid part-timers). One of these experts recently made clear to us that he and his colleagues would be willing to spend several unremunerated weeks on research for submission to a select committee . . . once, and probably only once. Simply put, if the Commons' new committees are to get capable outside advisers prepared to do a good job on a continuing basis then it will have to be paid for. The sums offered now to some part-time advisers are just not good enough, and the Commons has got to accept that reality. And even if an MP managed to acquire the services of a personal research assistant to help with committee work it would be to little avail, for such assistants are barred from committee meetings (held in private) and from seeing committee papers before they are published.

MATTERS are made worse by the long Whitehall tradition of disclosing as little information as possible. The premature death of the government's Protection of Official Information Bill at least means things will not, for the moment, get any worse. But as it is, the field of official information is less than fertile. For example, the government, as expected, has declined to comment on the negotiations underway regarding strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. The Prime Minister and her Defence Secretary have both called forth the fig leaf of 'national security'. But they have also argued that the public has before it ample information in the form of the Expenditure Committee report on nuclear weapons, implying that this document is in some way an example of open government. In fact, of the 270 pages of the report's evidence only 6 are taken up by memoranda from government departments. Future Commons Committees will have to demand much more than that.

By comparison, the most recent US Department of Defence Annual Report to Congress weighs in at an expectedly hefty 343 pages; the West German 1979 White Paper has a remarkable 293 pages (and they print an English edition); while our 1979 Statement on The Defence Estimates looks disappointingly thin at 95 pages. And this is not because our defence burden is any less than West Germany's: defence spending takes 3.4 per cent of their GNP; it takes 4.7 per cent of ours.

People have a right to know on what assumptions the government is working. If these are known and accepted the government's policies have that much more chance of being accepted. And in any event, if there isn't sufficient authoritative information, then there is rumour. If the government is to allow the new Commons committees to play a useful role, it must accept the fact that they will enquire, pry, disagree, demand and generally be a nuisance to Whitehall. And this is as it should be, for the primary basis of our government structure must be democracy – *not* simplicity and administrative convenience.

Michael Foot, MP

On 24 August 1979, the NEW STATESMAN published some paragraphs under the heading 'M. Foot and queers', in which a series of accusations were made against Michael Foot, alleging, for example, that he had been guilty of shameful treatment of a homosexual who worked in the Department of Employment. The Editor of the NEW STATESMAN wishes to make it clear that he has now had an opportunity of examining the facts, and finds that none of the charges can be supported by any of the available evidence, and therefore greatly regrets that such a paragraph was ever published.

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Mr Benn's Secret Service

In a controversial interview with *World in Action*, Labour's former Energy Minister tells of a back-room attempt to 'bounce' the Cabinet on a major nuclear issue: how the Civil Service built a by-pass round their minister: and the odd affair of the changing briefs.

ITV Monday 7 January at 8.30 pm

World in Action and its associated programmes have won the following awards:

Prague Festival, *Best Photography*, 1968
Cracow Festival, *Outstanding Journalism*, 1968
Cannes Festival, *Grand Prix*, 1968
Rank News Film Awards, *Best News Documentary*, 1969
Sun Awards,
Top Current Affairs, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974
Top Factual Programme, 1975, 1977
Critics Circle, *Best Current Affairs*, 1971
SFTA, *Best Factual Production*, 1971, 1972
Leipzig Festival,
Golden Dove, 1973
Documentary, 1979
American Film Festival, *Blue Ribbon*, 1974, 1975
New York International Festival, *Gold Medal*, 1975, 1979
BAFTA, *Shell International Award*, 1976, 1979
Cracow Festival, *Silver Dragon*, 1977
International 'Emmy', *Honours*, 1979
Columbia-Dupont Award, *TV Journalism*, 1979

GRANADA TELEVISION

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The myth of 'independent' schools

Visitors from abroad have always been puzzled by the way in which the British refer to exclusive, private educational establishments as 'public schools'. But, as RICK ROGERS shows, these schools do make enormous demands on the public – their annual cost to the taxpayer is rather more than that of British Leyland.

THE PLAN TO PUMP £55 million of public funds every year into the private education sector is no new departure. Taxpayers' money has been funding independent schools for years. Moreover, any attempt by Labour governments to cut off, or reduce, that funding has only scratched the surface of the problem. In short, private schools – which cater for a largely well-heeled and much privileged 5 per cent of children – are riding comfortably on the backs of the other 95 per cent. How does this happen?

We don't know precisely. Governments have always been reluctant to provide detailed or accurate information. Civil servants have obstructed the admittedly half-hearted efforts of Labour ministers to act against the privileged position of the private education sector (see NS 28 September 1979). Costs and statistics are hard to extract; there are above-the-surface costs and hidden costs. Most information has come from MPs asking carefully worded questions in Parliament. In a Commons debate on private education on 25 October 1979, Christopher Price (Labour MP for Lewisham West) put the existing 'subsidy' to independent schools at 'about £50 million'. The true subsidy – above and below the surface – amounts to considerably more: probably ten times more – half a billion pounds.

Above-the-surface costs come in two main forms – through government allowances for the education of the children of servicemen and diplomats, and through local education authorities (LEAs) buying places at independent schools. Official figures show that central government payments through the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office and the Overseas Development Administration accounted for almost £40 million in 1978/79. But the actual total is much higher. This is how it broke down:

Ministry of Defence: In 1955, a boarding school allowance was introduced for the armed forces 'to assist parents in providing a continuity of education for their children'. The allowance was available to all servicemen regardless of rank or where they were stationed, and was periodically updated by checking the level of fees at 'a representative sample of schools'. The sample would include schools like Eton, Harrow, Bedales and Roedean. In October 1979, the allowances were £1,359 for the first and second child; £1,617 for the third; £1,683 for the fourth and any subsequent child (DES circular 259, amendment no 22). In 1979, the average annual fee for an independent school day place was around £1,000; for a boarding place over £2,000.

In fact, the bulk of the allowances (69 per cent) is taken up by officers. In 1978/79, there were 39,725 male officers in the armed forces of whom 9,030 (22 per cent) took up a boarding allowance for their children. Of the 263,673 other ranks in the three forces, only 4,107 (1.6 per cent) took up the allowance. The cost – including travelling expenses and a cover for claimants' tax liability – was £32 million.

Around 20,000 officers' children were funded for boarding education in the UK – primarily in the independent sector. A further 150,000 'services' children attended LEA day schools here; while some 37,000 children – mainly of 'other ranks' – went to British Forces schools abroad. These are modelled on the comprehensive state system and are run by the Service Children's Education Authority (SCEA), through the Ministry of Defence. So while an efficient and accessible state system in miniature is available for the armed forces abroad, successive governments (Labour and Tory) have continued to fund a divisive scheme of schooling.

There are, of course, boarding places available in the maintained sector. However, they are being progressively reduced. In 1973, there were 132 state boarding schools catering for 10,219 pupils; in 1978, 110 catered for 8,992 children. Latest figures show a further drop to 89 schools. A second problem is that as a group these schools are lagging behind in terms of comprehensive re-organisation, and a disproportionate number operate on a selective entry basis. In 1979, only 66 per cent were comprehensive compared with a national proportion of 81 per cent of all secondary schools (including middle-deemed secondary schools).

Diplomatic staff: Children of diplomatic staff are also eligible for boarding school allowances as well as for day school fees abroad and travelling expenses. Many diplomatic staff who have their children with them in the 'host' country prefer to put them into that country's private sector rather than make use of the state system – and are funded by the UK Government to do so.

This created the recent bizarre situation of the 1974/79 Labour government's Washington ambassador, Peter Jay, having his children in an American private school and President Carter putting his child through the local state school. A further 'irony' is that the technical staff of the diplomatic service have their children directed to state boarding schools whereas the administrative and ambassadorial staff are free to use the private sector.

How the bill mounts up

	Estimate 1 £m	Estimate 2 £m
Ministry of Defence	32	32
Diplomatic staff	5.1	5.1
Overseas Development Administration	2.7	2.7
Fares	18	75
Local authority funding (including special education)	85.5	85.5
Charitable status: tax relief	35	35
Charitable status: rate relief	1.2	1.2
Bank of England loan scheme	1.7	1.7
Teacher training courses	170	255
Degree courses	161.5	161.5
	512.7	654.7

In 1978/79, boarding allowances totalled £3.8 million, day school fees £641,367 and travelling expenses £694,453 – an official total of £5.1 million (a 12 per cent increase on the 1977/78 total).

The same arrangements apply to staff employed in the Overseas Development Administration. Available official figures only cover boarding and day school fees – £2,336,000 in 1978/79. But, assuming that travelling expenses are in the same proportion as for diplomatic staff, we can add £373,760: a total of £2.7 million.

One key difficulty in calculating just how much it does cost the nation to provide a private schooling for defence and diplomatic staff is the lack of information about the fares incurred by the children. The expenses quoted in parliamentary answers – and listed above – are assumed to be a considerable underestimate. Research by the Campaign for Comprehensive Education (CCE) during 1978 came up with a minimum estimate of £15 million and a maximum of £62.54 million, based primarily on information provided in Commons answers. Allowing for inflation, the 1979 minimum and maximum (based on the CCE formula) would be £18 million and £75 million.

Local authority funding: The second major area of official expenditure is the payment of independent school fees by LEAs. In the absence of detailed figures being made available – except through parliamentary answers plus the statistics provided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) – only a general indication can be given.

The 1976 Education Act had put a check on LEA buying of independent school places. LEAs in future had to obtain the approval of the Secretary of State. Such approval was to be given only on certain conditions – a shortage of places in an LEA's maintained schools; an LEA's wish to widen parental choice on denominational grounds; a judgment that a child was in need of boarding education or had exceptional ability in music (including singing and dancing) and a shortage of LEA places existed for those needs. However, in 1977/78, the Secretary of State approved 3,611 out of 4,517 LEA applications – 80 per cent. In May 1979, the new Tory Education Secretary withdrew the obligation on LEAs to seek the Secretary's approval. A new set of regulations abolished the offending sections of Labour's 1976 Act and the two subsequent circulars. Thus, LEAs are free once again to spend ratepayers' money on funding private schools.

In August 1979, Dr Rhodes Boyson, DES Under-Secretary of State, declared it was not his function to favour one sector of education nor to neglect one or be the enemy of it:

> The independent sector has an essential role in society and in performing its role it exhibits certain qualities which I wholeheartedly applaud. The independent sector, by its very existence, is a safeguard against excessive State intervention in education and thus one of the defences of our freedom.

But as the cost of the state subsidies that flow into the independent sector is totalled up, it

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becomes clear that the private sector is far from independent, relying on state support for its existence. It is private education that is being 'favoured' and the maintained sector that is being neglected.

In February 1977, a national survey by the *Times Educational Supplement* (18 February 1977) revealed that LEAs were paying the fees for 40,000 independent school places. The estimated cost was £23 million for 1976/77. However, the total amount by which LEAs funded both direct grant and independent schools in 1976/77 was, according to CIPFA statistics published later, £38.3 million – and £39.4 million in 1977/78. This excluded the amount spent by LEAs on providing special education places in the private sector: £47.5 million in 1977/78.

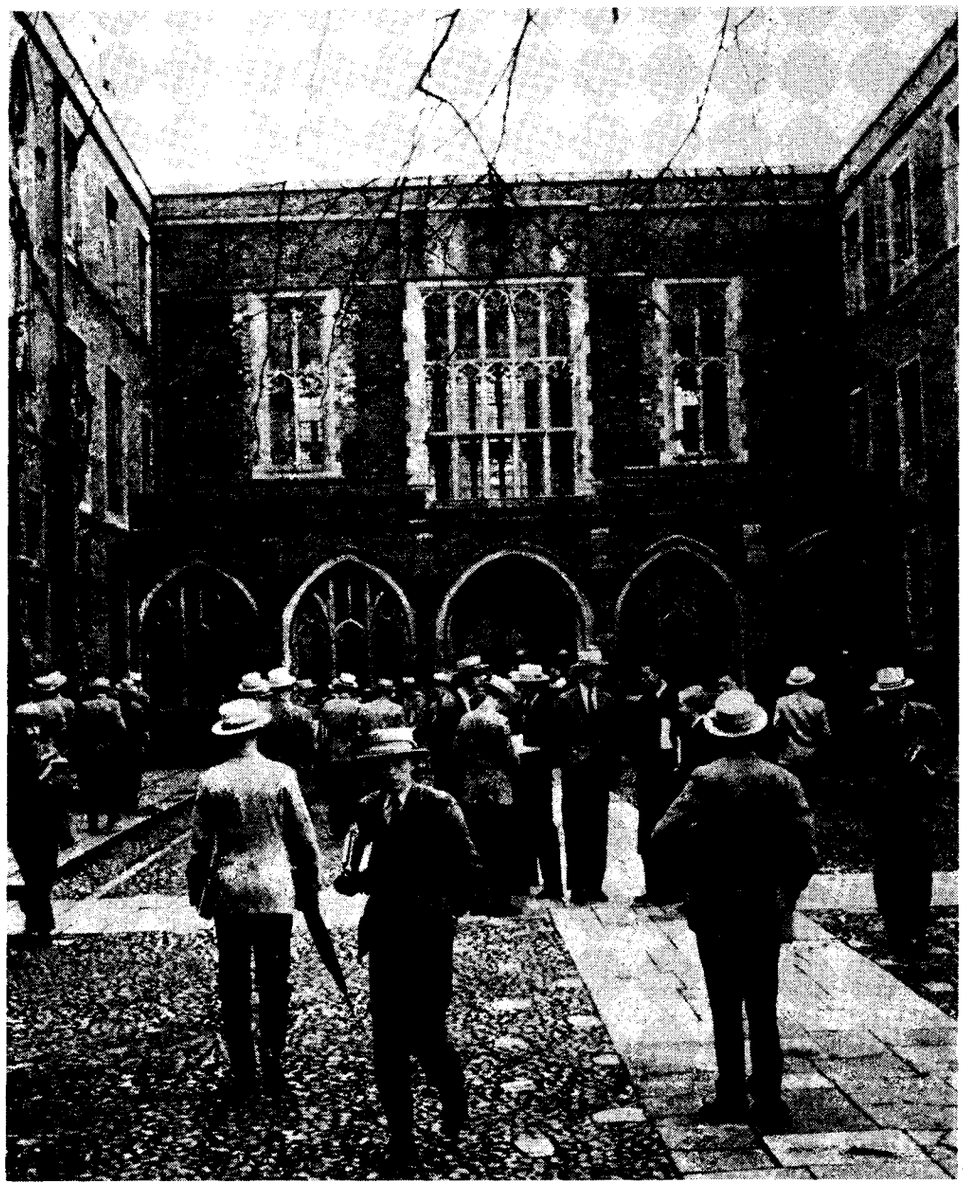
A subsequent set of CIPFA statistics put the cost of supporting non-handicapped pupils in 1977/78 at £41.7 million plus the additional £47.5 million spent on handicapped pupils (Commons answer, 20 November 1978). The CIPFA estimate for non-handicapped pupils in 1979/80 is £35.7 million and for special education £49.5 million – a total of £85.2 million.

The policy adopted by the present Tory administration means that, officially at least, no further information will be kept by the DES on LEA buying of private school places (Commons answer by Dr Boyson, 26 July 1979).

In 1977/8, LEAs supported 21,346 non-handicapped pupils and 7,362 handicapped pupils at independent schools. But the number supported throughout the whole non-maintained sector (including former direct grant schools and non-maintained special schools) was quoted in the Commons as 74,888. In 1978/79, that figure had officially dropped to 'just over 46,000' according to the latest DES figures. These figures include all handicapped children; those considered gifted in music or dancing; children of diplomatic staff and servicemen; all independent denominational places funded by LEAs; and those ('a substantial proportion') still working through the old direct grant system. The last group should largely be through that system by 1981/82 – just in time for the start of the assisted places scheme (aimed at supporting between 80,000 and 100,000 pupils).

The most recent figures produced by Government (for 1977/78) show that the top five LEAs supporting non-handicapped pupils at independent schools were Cheshire (2,712), Hampshire (1,267), Berkshire (1,163), Trafford (935) and Kent (890). But such figures don't tell the whole story. For example, Trafford's own figures for 1978/79 are 1,300 denominational and 530 non-denominational places. For 'some years now', Trafford has been operating a cash limit of £27,000 for funding non-handicapped, non-denominational pupils at independent schools. Nevertheless, for 1980/81, it will be spending £1.4 million to maintain *all* its non-handicapped pupils in the private sector.

Similarly, Lancashire says that it is funding 2,574 pupils in the private sector in 1978/79. But the official Commons-quoted figures for Lancashire for the year before were 566 non-handicapped and 183 handicapped pupils being supported in independent schools. This obfuscation – intentional or otherwise – does not hide the main fact about public support for the private sector: it has grown over the years – and in a period which has seen not only substantial cuts in spending on the maintained schools, but also attempts by the 1974/79 Labour Government to reduce the level of that public support.



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At the end of November 1979, many LEAs were undecided about their policy on funding private sector places from 1980 onwards. Some seem likely to wait for the central government-funded assisted places scheme to start in 1981 rather than take full advantage of the new 'freedom' to fund whomsoever they wish for a private education. Many are increasingly conscious of the political damage being done by a hard-nosed and partisan policy which cuts great swathes through an LEA's education budget for the maintained schools but *increases* the finances available to the private sector.

Charitable status: Independent schools are eligible for charitable status and as such are exempted tax from – income tax on their profits, capital gains tax and capital transfer tax. Parents gain tax relief from life endowment policies to fund a child through private school. In 1978, the Campaign for Comprehensive Education (CCE) estimated that the annual tax loss to the nation from allowing these schools to be regarded as charities was £25 million. Information on the level of tax relief enjoyed by particular kinds of charity is hard to come by. In April 1979, a parliamentary answer stated that relief amounted to £120 million in 1977/78 and would be the same in 1978/79. No more detailed information was available. But an unofficial Treasury estimate has subsequently indicated that the 1978 CCE figure of £25 million was too low and should have been nearer £30 million. Today it would approach £35 million.

Rate relief from the privilege of charitable status amounted to an estimated loss of income to local authorities of £1 million in 1978. Today, a closer estimate would have to be £1.2 million.

Teachers: Many teachers in the private sector have either been trained in a state college of education or have obtained a degree through a UK university. Independent schools are proud of the level of graduate teachers on their payroll and frequently use this as 'proof' of the superior education to be found in the private sector. Yet they depend on the state to provide both the initial training, the in-service training and the degree course to produce their staff.

In June 1977, the average annual cost of training a teacher was given as £2,125 at 1976 prices (Commons answer, 30 June 1977). Thus the three-year course would cost £6,375. Inflation at 37.3 per cent since the end of 1976 would have taken that cost to £8,500 today. In 1979, the annual cost of a place at

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university was given as £2,435 – that is the net institutional recurrent cost at 1978 prices (Commons answer, 3 April 1979). Again allowing for inflation, the cost of a three-year degree course would now be £8,619 (depending on the course followed – many would cost upwards of £10,000).

There are some 40,000 teachers in independent and former direct grant schools. The latest DES statistics on teachers (up to 31 March 1977) show that some 19,000 of those 40,000 teachers are graduates. Thus the state will have financed the private sector's graduate teaching force by at least £161.5 million. The majority of private sector teachers have gone through a training course; if half had, the cost to the state would be £170 million; three-quarters, £255 million.

There are other costs, too. Many private sector teachers make use of LEA in-service training facilities; some authorities make available school medical services, transport, advisory staff. LEAs supply school dinners to some non-maintained schools (£287,000 in 1977/78). Student teachers can undertake teaching practice in private schools; and qualified teachers can serve their probationary year in a private school, irrespective of whether that school had been regarded as 'efficient'. Although the inspection arrangement has ceased whereby the Department of Education recognised independent schools as 'efficient', the proposed assisted places scheme has revived the HM Inspectorate's involvement with the private sector – once again at the nation's expense, and over and above the £55 million minimum cost of paying for the places from September 1981.

Help from the firm: Many commercial firms and organisations help some of their employees to send their children to private school. A private education is as much a perk as a car, a sports club or help in buying a house. A small but significant additional cost to the taxpayer is the loan scheme operated by the publicly owned Bank of England. This helps permanent staff pay their children's private school fees. Employees may take out a loan at a substantially reduced rate of interest. This is calculated on the base or minimum lending rate (MLR) minus five, with a minimum rate of 5 per cent. With the MLR at 17 per cent, Bank of England employees are paying 12 per cent. Customers of the big four banks would have to pay 20 per cent plus – at least 3 per cent above the MLR – for a loan to pay off school fees. The scheme is currently helping 1,352 children through private schooling; the loans total £1.7 million. And the taxpayer helps to fund this special concession which no other civil servant gets.

THE NATION, then, is funding a lame duck industry which has to rely on importing rich kids from abroad and, more crucially, state handouts at home. In 1970, a major study of the finance of the private education sector concluded that 'direct public support constituted about 20 per cent of the income of the private sector in 1965/6'. (*Paying For Private Schools* by Howard Glennerster and Gail Wilson, LSE Studies in Education/Allen Lane). In 1979, the state was subsidising the private sector at the rate of a *minimum* of £350 million a year, and at a more likely rate of £500 million plus – the bottom of the barrel has still to be reached. It must be the British Leyland of the education world. In 1979, BL received £300 million from the Government, and has just been allocated £450 million for 1980, British Steel is to get that much in 1980/81. With its £½ billion plus, perhaps the private education sector should be renamed British Schools.

Yet another Commons answer (8 November 1979) stated that:

> *If all private primary and secondary schools in* England were closed and all the pupils at present attending them were accommodated in additional local education authority maintained schools, the capital building costs, including land, fees and furniture and equipment, would, it is estimated, be about £1,000 million. The cost of running the additional schools would be of the order of £200 million per annum.

In 1975, the DES was telling the Secretary of State that 'the provision of equivalent places in the maintained sector would (on an extremely rough reckoning) imply additional capital expenditure somewhere in the region of £500-£1,000 million and an addition to LEA current expenditure of well over £1 million a year'.

But one 'solution' to the massive state funding of private privilege has already been put forward: 'spare capacity resulting from falling rolls would allow most, if not all, of the pupils (from the private sector) to be accommodated in local education authority maintained schools'. The MP who said that was Dr Rhodes Boyson.

This article also appears in the January 1980 issue of Where, *published by the Advisory Centre for Education.*

Mick Hamer

Southampton's Catch-52

FIFTY-TWO houses containing 95 people are going to be demolished by Southampton City Council – at a cost of over £¼m – to make way for a road scheme which was abandoned six years ago. The houses – in the Dukes Road clearance area – have been condemned as unfit for habitation by the city health officer. But inextricably linked with the demolition of these houses is a road proposal – the Portswood Link. In effect the Southampton city engineer's department are taking advantage of the blight caused by the projected road to justify building the same road. For although the land to the north of Dukes Road is zoned for residential use in the city development plan, the council are going to use the site for temporary industrial purposes – such as lorry parks. The city engineer's report explained to the housing committee: 'The land . . . may in any case be required for a proposed traffic link from the M27 to the Eastern Docks although this proposal has not been finalised and the exact line of this road is not yet defined.' The report then explains why lorry parks should be preferred to rehabilitating the housing. '*Until the road is built* temporary use for industry, storage or car parking may be appropriate.' (My emphasis) The only plausible route for the new road is to the north of Dukes Road, since shifting the line to the south would entail the demolition of the Department of Transport's own driving test centre.

The Portswood Link was originally proposed in March 1968. Opposition to the link came when residents caught the city engineer's department red-handed – taking soil surveys. The whole scheme entailed the demolition of 650 houses and naturally generated considerable controversy. At a five week public inquiry in 1972 a strong case against any road was put by the Southampton Federation of Residents and Allied Associations. But before the inquiry result had been published the Portswood link had been overtaken by party politics. The Labour Party fought the 1973 May local elections on a 'Sink the Link' ticket and the new Labour council voted to drop the Portswood Link. This policy was reaffirmed in 1974, but not before the city engineer had told the *Southampton Echo* that he continued to support the link and that any other scheme would certainly be inferior.

The report of the 1972 inquiry finally became available in late 1975. Inspector John Brindley recommended against the link. But Whitehall and Hampshire County Council now lent their support to the Portswood proposal. First the Department of the Environment ensured that enormous tracts of blight would remain by writing to the county council asking them to safeguard the route of the abandoned link. Under local government re-organisation in 1974 Hampshire County Council had become responsible for the Portswood Link plans. Close co-operation between the county and the Department of Transport is ensured by the arrangement of appointing the county surveyor as head of the Hampshire sub-unit of the Department of Transport's construction unit.

So at the M27 side roads order inquiry the Department of Transport proposed a new scheme – the Swaythling Link – which despite the new name was essentially the first stage of the Portswood Link. Realising that building this link would undermine the case against the whole of the county's road, the Southampton Federation of Residents and Allied Associations opposed the scheme at a 1977 inquiry. Inspector Lambert, who reported in late 1978 effectively backed the SFRAA case by recommending that the link should not be approved until other alternatives had been considered.

Embarrassed by this result the Department of Transport is now consulting 'interested parties' – believed to be a reference to Hampshire County Council and Southampton City Council – on alternatives to the link. SFRAA have not been asked for their views, presumably they are not defined as an interested party.

Despite the evident enthusiasm of public servants for the Portswood Link little is likely to happen in the near future. The combination of public expenditure cuts and the higher priority given to other projects within the county is likely to mean that the Portswood Link will not be 'started within seven years'.

So seven years – or more – of lorry parks and 95 displaced people will be the consequence of this ill conceived scheme for Dukes Road. Redevelopment of the site for residential or other purposes will be difficult and expensive because rubble is to be dumped on the site to stabilise a bank. Consequently the site will lend itself to road-building. And because the houses are unfit, demolishing them to make way for a road will still be eligible for government slum clearance subsidy.

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POLITICS
Claudia Wright

'Crooked business as usual' is the route to success in Washington

America's abominable showmen

AT THE National Geographic Society in Washington last March, Dr Mary Leakey reported discovering that two proto-members of the human species had been able to walk along on both feet, leaving sturdy size 7 or 8 footprints in the dust, over three and a half million years ago. That was in a spot in northern Tanzania.

The discoveries have confounded conventional anthropology, which has insisted for years that the upright two-footed walk evolved at the same time as the human brain, which is thought to be less than a million years old. However, the findings confirm a discovery I made shortly after I came to Washington. This was that the human species must have evolved the capability for leaving tracks behind without concomitant development of brain size large enough to permit mental activity. Indeed, had these fellows been able to think they wouldn't have left any tracks behind at all.

The palanontologists have been convinced that Australopithecus and other apemen were evolutionary deadends who couldn't survive because their brains weren't up to it. I have discovered that the evolution of Washington's denizens has been driven by a visceral appetite that has made up for what they lack in cranial capacity, and produced some unique forms of the missing link. And they are still flourishing.

Take, for example, John Bowden Connally, whom a US prosecutor once accused of soliciting and receiving money which 'left a trail of footprints.' Mr Connally is a well known lawyer from Texas. He was Secretary of the Navy in 1961, governor of his state when President Kennedy was shot, an employee and close friend of President Johnson, Secretary of the Treasury for President Nixon, a presidential candidate for the Republican Party in 1976, and a candidate once more for 1980. Personally Mr Connally is a very rich man, with reported annual earnings of nearly $1 million from his law firm, from a cattle ranch, and from director's fees and honoraria.

As a candidate, he has already amassed so much more money than his opponents – though he continues to lag behind them in the polls – that he has declined to accept his entitlement to public election funds, in order to avoid the legal limits they place on campaign spending.

IT IS NOT possible to grow rich and powerful without leaving questionable footprints. In Connally's case, his best-known tracks were to and from the Associated Milk Producers Inc., a large dairy cooperative, which urged him in March 1971, when he was at the Treasury, to persuade President Nixon to raise government subsidies paid to milk producers. A go-between stated during the Senate Watergate hearings in 1973, and then at Connally's trial in 1975, that he had handed over two bribes, over $5,000 each. Connally was acquitted of all charges.

Far less familiar are footprints which Connally has left behind in Nixon's Watergate cover up, in the banking business, and on journeys to and from South Africa. The Watergate special prosecutor, Leon Jawa-

Camera Press

orski, is the source of an accusation that Connally was involved in assisting Nixon 'to hammer out our strategy on Watergate' – words Nixon himself is heard on tape to have uttered on 17 April, 1973.

A whispering campaign about this has come largely from Republican opponents of Connally's, but the potentially incriminating evidence remains sealed until Nixon's supreme court lawsuit to reclaim his tapes has been decided.

Connally is listed as the director of a bank in his home town, Floresville, and of the First City Bancorporation of Houston. In 1977, with considerable help from two Saudi Arabians, Connally bought the Main Bank of Houston. A year later, when one of the Saudis, Ghaith Pharaon, was trying to purchase the Georgia Bank stock of Bert Lance, he offered to sell his stake in the Texas bank back to Connally, the remaining Saudi, and another Texas Banker.

While there was nothing apparently illegal about the transactions, the publication of Connally's assets in the press hasn't disclosed the investment. It is also puzzling that Connally has accumulated only $2 million in reported assets when his take each year is at least half as much.

A FONDNESS for banks runs in the family, for, according to reports originally appearing in Dallas last September, seven Texas Banks were chartered by the US Comptroller of the Currency just before, during and soon after Connally's tenure at the Treasury.

What was unusual about the charters was that they were approved by the Comptroller over the advice and objection of his deputy and staff. The footprints grow more distinct when it is revealed that one of the charters, for Love Field National Bank, Dallas, was granted to a former aide and business partner of Connally's, and one of the original shareholders of the bank was Connally's son, John Connally III.

As secretary of the Treasury, the senior Connally was the superior of the Comptroller, who was a Texan Democrat first appointed by President Johnson. Connally has denied having intervened at all in the charter decisions, but then he hardly needed to. The Comptroller depended on Connally's favour to assure his reappointment in office under Nixon.

Another set of Connally's footprints lead to and from South Africa. A year ago, for example, he visited Johannesburg. Asked how he viewed trade sanctions, Connally replied:

> In most cases, these efforts are misdirected, largely because of a lack of information. Many people become emotionally involved because they believe the races here do not receive equal treatment in all respects . . .we should not be frightened off by the problems that exist in South Africa. Every country has problems . . . I think there is a beginning of a greater perception among average US citizens of the problems South Africa faces. . .of what South Africa is all about, what it has done, how much better off all the races are here compared with their counterparts in other African countries.

A few months after Connally made those remarks, Eschel Rhoodie, the former South African Information Ministry official, revealed that for several years his ministry had spent large sums to influence public opinion towards South Africa in the United States and elsewhere.

The campaign included donations to Presidential and Congressional candidates, free trips to South Africa, large honoraria for speeches, and an attempt, through a conservative American publisher, John McGoff, to buy the *Washington Star* and other papers.

The tracks grow so numerous here that it is difficult to distinguish their identity. Connally has not been named as the recipient of political donations from South Africa, but he has spoken (and presumably been paid) at South African sponsored meetings in the US. As a trustee of the Andrew Mellon foundation, he is closely associated with one of the Mellon heirs, Richard Mellon Scaife, who was one of McGoff's partners in the purchase of California newspapers after the *Star* takeover fell through.

He is also a director of Falconbridge Nickel Mines, a Canadian company, which digs gold and other metals in South Africa.

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THE PROBLEM with deciphering the tracks in cases like these is that you can never be certain whether the convictions follow the feet, or vice versa. This is Washington, after all, where private greed has long been able, through political philanthropy, to foster the appearance of public virtue.

Who then can say whether Mr Connally is an old-fashioned and unclever crook, favoured by the luck of having had unbelievable accomplices? Or an ideological simpleton who has mouthed his sponsors' slogans for so long that his public positions anticipate the rewards long before they are delivered, if they are delivered at all?

There is nothing surprising about the crookedness of public officials here. Since Watergate, the American public has been treated to a constant identification parade of elected representatives accused of soliciting and accepting bribes (Representatives Flood, Hanna and Passman), taking kickbacks on salaries paid to their staff (Representative Diggs), pocketing election donations and public funds for personal use (Senator Talmadge), ordering government agencies under their jurisdiction to make awards to their friends and clients (Representative Eilberg), extorting fees from immigrants to pay for Congressional bills granting them residency rights (Representative Helstoski), and so on.

Mark Twain described the Congress many years ago as the 'distinctly American criminal class', and thus do increasing numbers of Americans regard it. Although it is unlucky and unlikely for any indicted official to be convicted, let alone punished for his misdeeds, and although incumbents generally survive their challengers for years, the contempt in which they are held reflects itself in the declining rate at which the electors cast their votes. At the Congressional elections last year, two out of three voters didn't bother.

WHAT IS UNUSUAL about Washington now, even compared with its own past, is that the political system is driven, not so much by private wealth, which has always been true, as by private debt, which is an innovation as democratic as the credit card and the smalltown Bank.

The political parties play little part in the financing of campaigns, and as Mr Connally has demonstrated, party membership is as exchangeable as three-year automobiles. Public funds are unavailable to Congressional candidates, and so the result of the erstwhile election reforms of the 1970s has been the *growing* importance of a candidate's private pocket to pay his campaign bills.

Virtually unrecorded before 1972, this source of money was worth at least ten percent of House and Senate campaign funds in 1978, which together totalled $158 million. This private money is even more important to challengers than incumbents. however, for the latter are better endowed by the organized contributors, big business and unions.

In 1978, sitting members outspent challengers by more than a third.

For the political aspirant, therefore, the promise of future public office can become collateral for every money-raising scheme he has the ingenuity or cupidity to devise, or for which there exist hare-brained bankers with available lines of credit. And the bankers have so applied themselves to their political tasks that it has become difficult to tell exactly where credit ends and crookedness begins.

If there is one thing the Bert Lance case demonstrates, it is that the democratic process would suffocate financially of money if it wasn't for the smalltown banks.

Admittedly, the Calhoun First National Bank wasn't able to advance enough money to assure Lance of victory in his 1974 campaign for Governor of Georgia. Still, by rolling its overdrafts, loans and other notes to other local banks, borrowing from one to collateralize an even larger draw from another, it did enable Bert to do a few favours for Jimmy Carter.

And while the President has been found

Left, John Connally; right, Bert Lance.

innocent of any illegality, the link was enough to bring Ghaith Pharaon, later partner in Main Bank of Houston, rushing to rescue Lance from the deep embarrassment of having more liabilities than assets.

Now John Connally was a humble butcher's son from the hamlet of Floresville, and Bert Lance the son of a schoolmaster in the carpet milltown of Calhoun. The anthropologists will also note that both leave size 11-12 footprints – Lance's the flatter of the two. The tracks demonstrate that appetite is more than adequate as a substitute for intelligence in this jungle.

BUT CONSIDER the case of Smith Bagley – a more exclusive species, although his tracks have led in exactly the same direction. Bagley inherited approximately $40 million from a Carolina tobacco fortune. A considerable portion went in outlays for two hapless campaigns to win a Congressional seat in Winston-Salem – losses which should prove that, like any capitalist enterprise, it wouldn't be genuine if it didn't carry risk.

Bagley went on trial early this year on charges of fraud and stock manipulation. Seven years ago he and an associate were able to borrow money from a Virginia bank and with that merge their small icecream corporation into a much larger and more profitable North Carolina mill company.

A subsidiary of the mill then paid off their original debt, and Bagley went to work boosting his new stock with remarkable earnings reports and inflated market demand for the shares.

Allegedly, the way this was done was through pressure on the mill employees, their pension fund, and friendly banks in Reading, Pennsylvania, and Wilksboro, North Carolina. In the indictment, Bagley was charged with having forced the pension fund to divest itself of reliable blue chips, and replace them with stock from the mill's parent corporation, Bagley's company. The banks also helped by lending money to employees on the collateral of existing Bagley stock, to buy up more.

By this means, the price of the shares nearly tripled. Unfortunately, the mill earnings didn't, and by 1977 the auditors discovered vast losses. The company was bankrupt, and the employees' pension trust worthless.

When Bagley went to trial in Greensboro, it may well have been true that the townspeople were so incensed that it was difficult to compose an unopinionated jury. On that ground Bagley's lawyers were able to shift the trial to a court in Richmond, Virginia, presided over by Judge Robert Merhige.

What the prosecution didn't know at the time was that this judge had been an old friend of Bagley's family – one of whom had helped lobby Merhige's judicial appointment twelve years before. The judge was apparently hostile to the prosecution throughout the trial, imposing an unusually rapid schedule which the defence team of more than a dozen attorneys could cope with but the prosecution of two could not.

After the judge issued what they regarded as prejudicial jury instructions, and the jury returned with an acquittal, the prosecutors sent a formal complaint to their superior in the Justice Department.

From there it was picked up by the columnist, Jack Anderson, and then by a Senator who has threatened hearings if the justice department doesn't investigate the allegations of prejudice in the case.

Poor Bagley. He had come to Washington as a socially prominent supporter of the Carter campaign, bought one of the most renowned houses in Georgetown, and gave well-publicized parties for incoming administration officials.

His summer house had been given to the Carters for a vacation immediately after the 1976 election victory. There had been talk of Bagley getting an Ambassadorship, until his business affairs began to unravel. It was even printed in the newspapers that his local bank account was overdrawn, and tradesmen were sending bill collectors after him. This year he and his wife were dropped from the local social register.

That is hardly the end of the evolutionary line for the Bagleys. He has been acquitted of crookedness after all, and his credit line with the bank is apparently intact. In two or three years perhaps, – as in Connally's case – people may have forgotten enough for him to run for President. That is the one office which collateralizes all the wildest ambitions, to which lenders are most obliging, and from which no-one, for many years, has emerged poorer than he went in.

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LEYLAND John Salmon

Leyland workers' organisations are under conflicting pressures

The vulnerability of Derek Robinson

DEREK ROBINSON, according to Pat Lowry, the Employee Relations Director of BL, has not been dismissed for his role as Senior Convenor at BL's Longbridge's factory, but for his activities as chairman of the 'unofficial' and 'self-appointed' Leyland Combine Committee. Robinson is still awaiting the decision of his union, the AUEW, on the validity of his dismissal and the action they intend to take. He was elected to the chairmanship five years ago following the retirement of Dick Etheridge, the previous Senior Convenor at Longbridge. The Longbridge Senior Convenor is elected annually from a meeting of 800 shop stewards. It has been the policy of that body to send an elected representative to Combine Committee meetings, since 1952 the date of the formation of BMC. While there have been numerous instances of dismissal of shop stewards and Senior Stewards in the motor industry there has only been one previous example of a Combine Chairman being sacked. That was in 1948 when the first Chairman of the Nuffield Combine was declared redundant within one week of the organisation being formed. Though the shop stewards considered it a convenient ploy to remove their elected representative the newly formed Committee thought it premature to challenge the Company so early in its life. They responded by electing another Chairman.

The importance of a Combine is that it is the organised shop floor's response to the development of large multi plant companies. They assist interplant communications between shop steward organisations and overcome many of the limitations inherent in the historical development of the British trade union structure. The Leyland Combine, a merger of two previously existing Combines in the old BMC and the Leyland group of companies, is basically a forum for the interchange of information, and policies to delegates elected from shop steward organisations in the various plants.

They originally sought to protect piecework standards and conditions, and to prevent management from transferring work, cutting rates, or playing off one section of the company's workforce against that of another. Where work or machinery was being transferred the Combine could inform what the price for the job was. Particular plants might not accept transferred work if it entailed a redundancy in another plant or the plant's workforce opposed the loss of work. That remains the policy of the Combine. However, in the 1950s these purely domestic concerns inevitably gave way to wider issues. The Combine increasingly found it necessary to formulate more general views. The BMC Combine began to involve itself in redundancy, automation, mergers, takeovers, government trade bans on overseas markets (particularly East European) and fiscal policies which influenced the demand for cars.

The influence of the Combine did not arise from any central position of power and authority. It was, and still is, a policy making body devoid of executive power. On the basis of experience and exchange of views it was only able to recommend policies. Acceptance was dependent upon the stewards in each plant. Hence support varied greatly between different plants and the 20-odd unions in the industry, often depending upon the issues involved. However, the Combine was not without influence. Certainly many of the national union policies on redundancy, automation, and joint consultation originate from the views of the Combine. The real strength of the Combine lay in its membership being Senior Shop Stewards, the leadership of the workplace shop steward organisations. Through the Combine organisation the stewards have been able to acquire a wider and more speedy knowledge of corporate policies. A telephone call could prevent under priced work being accepted or transferred by a particular shop floor organisation, whereas a decision by the official trade union machinery, particularly if it involved a number of unions and different districts, would take weeks if not months. The initiative could be lost.

The official trade union leadership, especially the AUEW, has often characterised combines as posing an alternative power basis, and not unlike their previous opposition to joint shop steward committees, have seen them as not accountable to official union machinery. Motor industry combines with their own source of finance, constitution, standing orders committee, elected officers, and newspaper, enabled them to gain a semi autonomous existence from the unions, and a certain proneness to external political influences.

In the early 1960s the AUEW leadership tried to discipline members of the Combine for organising meetings across union districts but they were often blocked by their District Committee organisations who claimed it was their responsibility to deal with shop stewards in their districts. The TUC also warned of the possible influence of 'unofficial' organisations in 1961, but during the last 10 years the TUC has come to advocate their advantages. This has been due to the general growth in multi plant companies, the change in attitude of union leadership, especially under Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones, but also the effect of attempts to formalise bargaining at workplace level.

THIS FORMALISATION has created problems at Leyland. The merger of BMC and Leyland in 1968 created a quandary for the management.

Among the 34 plants that made up the merger of Leyland in 1968, differing customs, traditions, and industrial relations practices existed. Senior management freely admitted loss of control over labour costs through the piecework system. In many instances the unions possessed the more reliable figures for wage payments. Measured daywork, a major company wide reform, was introduced as 'the act of taking the piecework bargaining element away from the Stewards and the shop floor trade union organisations . . . (it) . . . would automatically render the irksome negotiating elements unnecessary, and having removed the basis of shop steward power and authority would leave the company in control of levels of production, track speed, wages and conditions.'

Though this objective has not been achieved, with workshop organisation insisting on 'mutuality' over these areas of control, measured daywork has centralised bargaining within the plant – negotiations being undertaken by a smaller number of senior shop stewards, most of them employed full-time on industrial relations matters. Management has encouraged this development by providing them with offices, secretarial assistance, telephones etc. Power and influence has thus moved away from the shop floor and shop steward working with his work group.

Participation at BL, following the Ryder Report, and public ownership of the company, further encouraged this centralisation of influence into the shop floor leadership. It provided an alternative structure of joint committees representing management and unions, at plant, divisional, and national level. But it took the factory trade union leadership further away from regular shop floor contact and embroiled them in a network of committees, and sub-committees, operating outside the plant, perhaps three and four days a week, on what are seen as 'grumble' committees where no votes are taken, where no accountability to the workplace existed. This centralisation and removal of plant leadership has weakened the role of individual shop stewards and the joint shop stewards committees.

The Combine Committee until recently supported these developments, as they supported public ownership. They felt this would enhance both job security and modernisation but a change in attitude occurred, as Derek Robinson admits, among the Senior Shop Steward leadership. In support of its changed ownership, they identified with how the firm should be run, raised questions of efficiency, and how involved the leadership should be in the survival of BL. However, the increasing distance from the shop floor, with the loss of familiarity, access, and the traditional identification of the senior convenors with the long established expectations of shop floor workers to the role of trade union representatives, has established a credibility gap. His association with the problems of management efficiency opposed to shop floor values has made Derek Robinson in the role of chairman of the 'unofficial' Combine Committee vulnerable from all sides, management, sections of the trade union leadership and shop floor.

Senior BL management, however, still face the task of extracting increased productivity, lower manning levels, 'speed up' and removal of many traditional working practices enforced by the shop floor. With a demoralised shop floor organisation and a Combine Committee unable to secure support from all the trade union leaderships, the BL recovery plan could mark a clear break in the conduct of industrial relations. The limits of that change are largely dependent upon the degree to which the shop floor workers will tolerate the more abrasive kind of management we are now seeing.

John Salmon is a lecturer in Industrial Relations at Manchester Polytechnic. He has studied the Leyland Combine for three years.

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London Diary

☐ My most memorable images of Christmas in London, 1979: standing in the supermarket queue behind a middle-aged man whose wire basket contained one pre-cooked chicken wing, a small packet of frozen peas, a box of four mince pies, and six 425g tins of cat meat – instant biography. The other is of fighting my way into the Bank and confronting a poster which said, 'If You've Got This Far You Need An Executor.'

In an attempt to recapture, or find, or invent the spirit of the thing, I looked up 'Churches' in the Yellow Pages and rang St-John-at-Hampstead. Indeed, he replied, they had a Midnight Mass. We arrived early, and stumbled about among the tombs, looking for John Constable. Cypresses and cedars against the London sky, fog in the graveyard, a tolling bell – it looked hopeful.

A mistake. The service had just about as much spiritual uplift as a resurrected turkey. The sheepskin-jacketed, headscarfed faithful. Came them, doleful and reluctant, came them and came them to Bethlehem; we were asked to pray for many worthy causes, including one called Gerald and Bill; an elderly choirboy, apparently disgusted with the whole thing, opened his mouth occasionally to yawn, and shut it again in an expression of virulent hatred; the temperature of conviction hovered around zero.

☐ I was in Belfast the previous weekend, taking part in a book programme for the BBC. I seem to do a lot of church-going for an agnostic, but the only entertainment in Belfast on a Sunday morning is the Reverend Ian Paisley, and I was curious. Immediately I walked through the swing doors of The Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church in Ardenlee Avenue I was greeted by a courteous but formidable bouncer in the guise of a churchwarden. A visitor? Perhaps I would sign the book. No searching of handbags. God knew I could have blown up the Reverend, but took the risk.

A huge legend over the altar proclaims 'We Preach The Crucifixion Of Christ' – whatever that means – but otherwise it might be a Bingo hall. Apart from a few obvious outsiders, like myself, the congregation was mostly composed of septuagenarian ladies and neat little girls in hats. A technician in shirt-sleeves was setting up the video and tape recorders and the organ sounded as though it had risen, aglow, from nether regions – I thought I recognised a rather frolicsome rendering of 'Me and My Gal'.

When Paisley appeared, in a black cassock and an impression of boots, he looked slightly younger and less repellent than he does on television. Without ado, he began to hector God. 'Send to this little Province divine deliverance': he bawled. 'Smite its enemies: Overthrow all the machinations and conspiracies hatched against it: Let the people see that THE GOD OF ULSTER STILL LIVES!' A few people muttered assent and then everyone sang a psalm which had been translated into doggerel by some distinguished presbyterian scholar in order to obscure its meaning.

The sermon was based on the unedifying story of Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar, (Judges 3) – a group three of dubious brigands who, according to Paisley, represent 'Consistency, Persistency and Resistancy'. 'And the children of Israel did evil again! *Evil again!* EVIL AGAIN! So the Lord strengthened Eglon – the Lord strengthened the IRA! – against the people! That's a startling thought, isn't it?' The congregation was, indeed, startled; that is, it appeared to wake up for a moment. 'Why has God permitted evil men to be strong? He has permitted it so that the true people of God, the elect of God, might know how to use the sword! That they might be militant! And strong! And fervent! And filled with confidence! That they might know how to defy, and defend the principles of the Gospel! . . . I tell you, when I get to heaven I want a yarn with this fellow Shamgar! I would like to have him around today there's a few apostiate (sic) skulls need to be cracked, a few apostiate craniums need to be broken!'

Paisley has frequently been fined for 'disorderly behaviour', and done two stints in Crumlin Road Prison for disturbing the peace, (though what peace, it's hard to say). From what I understand to be the Christian point of view, the sermon I heard was immoral, but not actually evil – the old ladies weren't likely to go out and smite Catholic passers-by with their umbrellas. But that afternoon the Apprentice Boys of Derry would parade from Ballynafeigh Orange Hall to hear him preach under the title 'NOT AN INCH AND NO SURRENDER!'. To let him loose among the young is criminal negligence on the part of – whom? The law is timid, and the man would flourish as a martyr.

☐ As a two-pack-a-day smoker, I suppose I should have been grateful for Bernard Levin's attack on the 'fanaticism' of non-smokers. Lord knows I suffer, particularly in the homes of prohibitionist daughters, where I pollute the air, transmit carcinoma to my grandchildren with every puff, and spend most of my time surreptitiously washing up ashtrays. Because I'm a smoker, I've never been able to work in libraries, or to go to the theatre, concerts, art galleries or museums with any real pleasure. Even going to the movies has become a worry, and waiters who used to leap forward with lighters have grown prim and stand-offish.

I don't, however, feel that my liberty is threatened. Smoking isn't a liberated act, it's an addiction. Tobacco addicts have no more 'rights' than junkies or alcoholics. I agree that one's health is – up to a point – one's own concern; but we are frightening the horses, and that's indefensible. I'm sure that Levin wouldn't give a thought to the indivisibility of freedom if someone were to spit on his floor or shit on his doorstep or bring a pet skunk to dinner. And what about the freedom to sit next to Bernard and chew gum, noisily, throughout *Parsifal?*

☐ The International Year of the Child ended in acrimony and tears. Its Patron, wearing two ropes of pearls, a large diamond brooch and an expression of vague distaste, compered a television programme on Christmas Day which included shots of her daughter peering at starving babies, and of herself at the IYC bonanza in Hyde Park, waving from her carriage and being, as she put it, 'involved'. The media raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for Kampuchea, which made a lot of people feel good, and most of the money collected by the UK Association for the IYC went to the Third World. In the meanwhile the British Government was speeding ahead with its programme to revive illiteracy and rickets, making the country safe for plutocracy.

Dr Barnardo was peevish, and tiny Tims all over the country were deprived. A Children's Home in a Greater London borough, which at Christmas generally gets a reasonable sackload of toys and goodies, received nothing this year but a parcel of books from the ever-charitable *Daily Express.* The children are aged from zero to eight, and are mostly handicapped in some way: the books were *Jane Eyre, Tom Brown's Schooldays, Heidi* and *Gulliver's Travels.* 'You've got to be on TV,' the superintendent said, 'before people take any notice. But so long as they're actually getting the stuff in Kampuchea, I don't mind my kids going without. It's just hard to explain, that's all.'

I'm not arguing that charity begins at home. I'm just saying that when you take the lid off, it stinks.

☐ *New York Ban On Boxing After Death* – the headline of the year? Maybe it's those new-fangled machines they're using instead of sub-editors. Anyway, it'll make working in the morgues a good deal easier.

Loaded with bath oil, seed packets and Nature Diaries, I'm hurrying back to the Cotswolds, where the action is. With three back copies of the local weekly to read, I may find out what's going on in the world.

Penelope Mortimer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ 'He wasn't mean with Donald and I – he just *didn't spoil us. A chauffeur drove me to school, but* I had to walk home with my governess and I didn't get a car until I was 19.' – *Brighton Evening Argus* (Jill McQueen)

☐ Merseyside Ambulance Service reported yesterday that it had taken 12 men to hospital suffering from torn muscles after using chest expanders given as Christmas gifts. – *Guardian* (Elizabeth Hale)

☐ Despite the modern world's atrocities, it is still a shock to see an Oxford man hanged. – *Daily Telegraph* (John T. Hart)

☐ A lonely teenager yesterday achieved his 'ambition' – by being sent to Borstal. The boy, 16, was fed up living in bed and breakfast accommodation, and committed a string of crimes so that he would be sent away to join his friends, his solicitor told Snaresbrook Crown Court, East London. Judge John Stucley sent him to Borstal where he would get training to achieve his other ambition – to become a plumber. – *Daily Express* (Russell Holmes)

☐ A soccer team have been warned: 'You won't play if you have your hair permed.' Mick Jones, new manager of Mansfield Town, thinks the fashionable curly-headed style 'detracts from a manly image'. – *Sun* (Russell Holmes)

☐ Complaints from people who saw *Privates On Parade* at York's Theatre Royal seem to have given the production a welcome boost. Bookings were slow for the Peter Nichols play until members of the public complained to their local papers about some of the language used. Theatre publicity officer, Amanda Laidler, told *The Stage* that the box office picked up immediately after the stories appeared. – *The Stage* (Keith Norman)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Dust thou art

From Sir Derek Ezra

Roger Woddis's verse 'Dust thou art' (NS 7 December) is based on an entirely incorrect introductory statement which invalidates the rest of his contribution. Neither the National Coal Board nor NCB doctors are involved in any way with the decisions of Pneumoconiosis Medical Panels who assess disability. The medical panels are appointed by the Department of Health and Social Security. It is they alone who decide whether a man should receive industrial benefit.

National Coal Board, Hobart House, Grosvenor Place, London SW1

The problems of St Matthew's

From M. Quasim FRCP, MRC Psych

On behalf of my consultant colleagues and myself, I would like to take this opportunity to state that your recent article 'scandal of St Matthew's Hospital' (NS 2 November) does little credit to objective investigative reporting, could do incalculable harm to the morale of the dedicated workers in the hospital and, above all, is a gross disservice to the present and the future psychiatric patients and their relatives. It can only be described as sensational and misleading, if not a 'journalistic truncheon' full of misrepresentations and overgeneralisation. In the interest of allaying public concern and anxiety, I will briefly deal with some of the criticisms in the article and point out:–

1. St Matthew's Hospital is a progressive, open, community-orientated hospital, given category 'A' by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, which provides an in-patient service for a very large catchment area. In spite of the substantial increase in the population within the clinical area and especially that of the elderly mentally infirm, the number of in-patients has dropped from 1,300 to 800. It is also among the hospitals which independent research reported as having the fewest 'long stays' (long stays defined as being in the hospital for two years or over). This can only be attributed to: (a) an active rehabilitative programme; (b) five day hospitals; (c) group homes in every part of the catchment area, plus hostels; (d) community nursing; (e) out-patient and prompt domiciliary service.

2. It certainly operates on a basis of three sectors – North Warwickshire, South East Staffordshire and Walsall. Sectorisation is an accepted and widely practised principle which facilitates continuity of care and close liaison with community facilities and contact with the health care professionals and is thus to the total advantage of the patients and their families.

3. ECT is a proven therapeutic procedure used by reputable psychiatrists all over the country to effect a rapid improvement in the mental state of patients in certain well defined clinical situations. It is not only dishonest but mischievous to imply that ECT is used as a punitive and vindictive procedure to contain and pacify patients in St Matthew's Hospital.

4. (a) The GNC criticisms regarding laxity of drug handling were essentially technical with a view to 'discouraging' cutting corners. There were no implications of mal-treatment or wilful endeavour by the nursing staff to harm patients or to usurp the authority of the doctors. (b) Paraldehyde *is not* banned in 'other psychiatric hospitals'. Far from being dangerous, it is described as a drug whose chief advantage is freedom from important side effects (*British National Formulary 1978*, p 83). It is *not a corrosive* and the only reason for using a glass syringe, of which your misinformed reporter is unaware, is the fact that Paraldehyde is a solvent for some types of plastic and as such would interact with plastic material. (c) Any intramuscular injection could produce an abscess but this would be largely due to incorrect or non-sterile injection techniques.

5. Psychotherapy is an integral part of psychiatric management and practised in various forms in our day hospitals. In fact, we not only practise psychotherapy but also run an excellent training programme for our junior doctors.

May I finally add, that a combination of chance and history has always put the psychiatric patient at a disadvantage. The psychiatric services all over the country are grossly under-capitalised. The balance we feel is unfairly tilted towards more glamorous specialities. We admit that the situation is far from ideal: (a) there is considerable room for improvement; (b) we require more amenities; (c) more medical and nursing staff; (d) greater supportive services in the community. To muffle these facts would hinder rather than advance progress. What we could do without is totally unfair criticism and adverse publicity which would prevent psychiatric patients seeking help because of fear of the hospital and thus put their lives at risk.

St Matthew's Hospital, Burntwood, nr Lichfield

from Howard Sharron

Since the publication of the article 'Scandal of St Matthew's' (NS 2 November), John Heddle has been jumping every which way. On 5 November he told the *Wolverhampton Express and Star* that he was 'concerned about allegations that non-trained staff were using drugs on patients, including Paraldehyde which he said had been banned for many years in other hospitals'. He also demanded a public inquiry into the hospital. He has now dropped his call for an inquiry and is defending the use of Paraldehyde. In his letter (NS 23 November) he 'nails the lie' to a statement made in my article by saying that the drug was not generally banned, quoting the Minister of Health as evidence. But in fact I never stated that the drug had been generally banned, only 'banned in other psychiatric hospitals for some years'. *Psychiatry for Students* states: 'The days of bromides and Paraldehyde are past ... as an intramuscular injection (Paraldehyde) is crude, cruel, cumbersome and carries a significant risk of abscess formation.'

Mr Heddle's investigative zeal has now turned from the charges made in the GNC report and my article to the staff who, after failing to achieve changes inside the hospital were courageous enough to risk their careers to leak the report. Mr Pealing's letter (30 November) was similar to Mr Heddle's letter in that it combined generalised denials with distortions, omissions and personal smears. His suggestion that the GNC report was not highly confidential but 'received in confidence' needs no comment. Staff informed me that the report, which Mr Pealing said was for 'full and open discussion for all concerned with nurse training', was not made available generally in the hospital until after publication of the article in NS.

I did not state that the report *said* that patients' lives were being endangered through systematic abuse of medical standards. The words in my first paragraph were my own, based on the findings of the report, findings which Mr Pealing deftly forgot to mention. The charge that I did not check the facts is untrue. I checked with staff working at the hospital and staff who have recently left. I also have in my possession a series of internal and official documents, dating back to 1970, describing problems of staff shortages, rehabilitation, availability of doctors and lack of specialised treatment units.

To claim that I suggested the use of the PRN system (treatment when necessary) was somehow unusual or abnormal is a deliberate misinterpretation of the article. I went out of my way not to attack the system as such, but to say that staff shortages combined with over-concentration on drug therapy were creating a dangerous situation. I quoted Mr Pealing as saying the PRN system was 'quite legitimate'.

When I questioned Mr Pealing about the GNC report on the administration of drugs his answers were contradictory. He stated that it was purely a technical problem of doctors not signing cards that had been typed (which is clearly not the view of the GNC report), declined to comment on specific charges and then said that the policy of drug administration was being reviewed. To quote directly from the report: 'Alterations have been made to many cards and not initialled and variable dosages entered mean that nursing staff were deciding in some cases the level of medication and even deciding if drugs should be given. This method of drug administration is potentially dangerous.'

The other example Mr Pealing chooses to illustrate the incorrect assumptions of the article was a remarkably minor charge – 'the patients' possessions were kept on the floor covered with a large cloth'. This was a direct quote from the GNC report in the context of a description of Tuke Ward where it was also stated that 'dormitories are overcrowded and one dormitory of 13 beds had no lockers or wardrobes, although metal lockers were provided in another part of the ward ...'

Finally I did tell Mr Pealing that I intended to visit the hospital but I chose not to do so immediately as I suspected that conditions would not have been typical. One member of staff told me that on the day the media arrived he had never seen so many staff on a ward that had been highlighted in the report. Whatever the appearance of the hospital it in no way affects the majority of the problems raised in the article – caused by staff shortage and disputed approaches to mental illness, which together make victims of nurses and patients alike.

28 Kingsley Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12

Martyred?

From David Holbrook

It seems to be dawning on the Left that pornography is a form of exploitation which, in the words of a manifesto put out by the London Feminist Revolutionary Group, reduces women to the contemptible status of 'plastic daffodils' and in its excited hate is akin to racism. Mr Willie Hamilton MP, however, has not yet discovered this, judging by his contribution to the debate in the Commons on the private member's Bill on indecent displays. He wants no-one to tell him what he may read: yet presumably he approves of the fact that if he put up a poster discriminating against black men, and refused to take it down, he would find himself in prison.

Mr Hamilton went on to declare that some people who opposed pornography had done very well out of it. I can tell Mr Hamilton what happens to anyone who speaks out against this fashionable form of exploitation of people's feelings. They do not, like Mr Hugh Heffner, accumulate £84,000,000 – the last estimate I saw of the value of the *Playboy* empire. They find they are ostracised, so that the pages of certain journals become closed to them, while not only their books attacking cultural debasement are refused favour of a review, but other works as well. They find a strange reluctance on the parts of many agencies to admit that they exist, whether they are applying for grants for research or for jobs. They find, in fact, that there is a 'liberal' tyranny which, to the astonishment of anyone who believes in British tolerance and openness, is prepared to deprive heretics of their livelihood, if possible. I know that my opposition to pornography has cost me thousands of pounds, and, indeed, has virtually ruined my career as a writer.

I hope, now that so many others are speaking out, like Roy Fuller, Boris Ford the editor of *New Universities Quarterly*, Professor E.W.F.Tomlin and Fred Inglis in the same journal (Inglis proposed a socialist campaign against cultural exploitation) and Professor Martin Roth, that it may become at least acceptable to have doubts. The Williams Committee has certainly at least recognised a problem.

Longacre, Haverhill Road, Stapleford, Cambridge

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LETTERS

Play off

From Yosef Lapid

Instead of using polite excuses I should have told David Mercer (NS 21/28 December) the truth: that he has written a bad play.

Israel Broadcasting Authority

School sale

From Cllr Peter Croft

I fear that that part of Mr Rogers's article 'Building the selective ghettoes – fast' (NS 14 December) that dealt with Ealing's proposed sale of a school to the Church of England contained some serious distortions. I undertook the consultation process with Cllr Lady Henniker-Heaton, and am in as good a position as any to correct him. We have no evidence to suggest that a C of E school would be racially divisive. Almost every other authority has a church secondary school, most of them containing a wide range of classes and races. Your correspondent's suggestion that no West Indians are Christian is a piece of misinformation so gross that I am amazed to see it committed to print. We have no intention of allowing any more children to be bussed into the school from outside the borough than we can help. It will be no easier for the school to select on grounds of ability than it will for any other borough school.

The suggestion that the consultation process was rigged and devious is as disgraceful as it is unfounded. The programme, which we carried out in full, was accepted as fully adequate by the Labour group on the council, despite their opposition to the proposal. Any deficiencies in it were caused entirely by some half-dozen protesters who appeared at every meeting and, by raising the same points time after time (points that Lady Henniker-Heaton and myself had already answered as fully as was possible considering that no evidence for them was ever presented) rendered meaningful discussion very difficult. There was no question of stifling public debate. The local press has aired the question very thoroughly and every councillor was fully aware of the objectors' case.

I find it difficult to understand the assertion that there is no evidence of demand for the school, since the whole opposition case rests on the hypothesis that the school will be massively oversubscribed, thus rendering élitist selection possible.

Finally, I can personally assure you that the consultation process, contrary to your correspondent's assertion, has had a very strong influence on at least one councillor's decision. Before it, I was at best a lukewarm supporter of the scheme. I am now a convinced adherent.

Members' Room, Town Hall, Ealing, London W5

British out

From Aodogan O'Rahilly

I suppose we should have learnt by now that every Englishman is purblind on the subject of Ireland, and we should not be surprised that Professor Crick has written about 4,000 words on the Irish problem (NS 7 December), without even mentioning the most obvious option – that the British get out.

The British have as much business in Ireland as the US had in Vietnam, the French in Algeria, the Germans in France, or the Russians in all the countries they have occupied. In every case there were many local quislings who supported the occupation forces, just as there are in Ireland.

Nor did Professor Crick think it worth mentioning, maybe he does not know, that Derry and Newry, the two largest cities in the six counties, outside Belfast, have large nationalist majorities: as also have the counties Tyrone and Fermanagh, as well as the southern parts of counties Down and Armagh. The area of the six counties in which a majority of the population favour the British occupation is Belfast and 13 miles around it.

Clondalkin, Co. Dublin

Iranian point-of-view

From Scheherazade Daneshkhu

I would like to express my gratitude to the NEW STATESMAN for its perceptive and unprejudiced articles about Iran. I refer in particular to your editorial of 30 November which shrewdly grasped the cause of the Iranian problem and dispelled many myths. Most Western journalists totally ignore the CIA-backed coup against Dr Mossadeq yet anti-American feeling stems from that event. Dr Mossadeq has been a national hero for many years; he is one of the best-loved and best-known characters in Iranian history. The fact that so few Westerners have heard of him is harmful because it leads to a lack of understanding. As you so correctly conclude, all Iran wants is to run its own internal affairs; it has no great schemes or plans. It merely wishes to be rid of foreign intervention. My opinion of the Western press had sunk to a nadir; your editorial cheered me into thinking that some clear-headed and truth-seeking journalism still exists.

37 Buckingham Court, Kensington Park Road, London W11

Suzie's songs

From Anna Levison (age 12)

In the article by Gail Wilson (NS 21/28 December) she asks for an explanation of 'tacky'. The words I know for this song are:

I went to see Kentucky,
To see a summer fair,
I saw a senorita,
With flowers in her hair.

34 Greystone Gardens, Kenton, Harrow, Middx

GIM, KIM, AI and WHY

From Than Tin

As a researcher in 'intelligence' (known as Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the USA or Machine Intelligence (MI) in England), I have read Henry Kissinger's *White House Years* (WHY) with a view to finding out whether the intelligence exhibited in WHY is programmable. A quick run through WHY confirms that, indeed, it can be. Theoretically, AI approach is most successful when the thought systems it studies contain rule-governed behaviours and/or strong beliefs, and on both counts, Henry Kissinger's opus eminently qualifies. Reading Bruce Page's review of WHY (NS 23 November) and Stanley Hoffman's (*New York Review of Books*, 6 December) only increases my own initial bias.

Bruce Page's: 'More publicly, Kissinger and Nixon deployed the accompanying idea of "linkage": a misapplication to international affairs of *the simplistic causality in the old rhyme* [my italics] about the fire that made the stick beat the dog, which made the dog bite the pig, and in turn made the pig jump over the stile' is a humorous but a fairly accurate description of Rube Goldberg Machine, which in turn is a quintessential but a humorous example of early Artificial Intelligence.

One of Stanley Hoffman's observations: 'He [Kissinger] supported Pakistan against India because Pakistan was our ally, and China's friend, whereas India had signed a treaty with Moscow, and India's war threatened "our geopolitical design" '. points to a decision-making style that appears amenable to programming. In short, WHY is chock-full of 'programmables'. from pithy maxims to statements of principle and proposition so inexorably stated that they read like the theorems of propositional calculus.

First and foremost among these is of course Henry Kissinger's concept of 'linkage', particularly in the strong sense he uses it, and the lack of degrees of freedom inherent in such usage. This lack of the degrees of freedom in Henry Kissinger's diplomacy is nowhere more evident than in his handling of the Cambodian crisis. When asked to consider the option of diplomatically moving to bring Sihanouk back from Peking, i.e. to restoring Sihanouk's *status quo ante*, Henry Kissinger not only demurred at the suggestion but also confessed to not understanding the moral distinctions so involved. Only at the last minutes. when the Khmer Rouge were swarming like locusts at the outskirts of Phnom Penh, did he assent to the proposal. Representing, i.e. translating, such steadfastnesses into machine language should not be much more difficult than the earlier application of Artificial Intelligence Method to a similar but slightly simpler thought system, known in some AI circles as the 'Goldwater Ideology Machine'. GIM, modelled in Cold War terms, conforms to the thought trajectories of arch-conservatives, such as that of US Senator Barry Goldwater. Ask GIM: 'If Communists attack Thailand, what will happen?' and GIM (in eccentric syntax) answers: 'If Communists attack Thailand, Communists take over unprepared nations unless Thailand ask-aid-from United States and United States give-aid-to Thailand.'

In simple GIM, the world is bi-polar, the view is Manichean, and the troublemakers are invariably Communists. In sophisticated KIM (an appropriate name for a computer model of WHY if someone takes the trouble to construct one), the world will no longer be bi-polar, ordinary morality will be subsumed under the concept of equilibrium, and the trouble-makers can no longer be unambiguously identified, the jinx in the Machine being that a holy man, such as Ayatollah Khomeini, and a mild Marxist such as Allende, both can now be very easily qualified as trouble-makers.

New York City, USA

Interrogating Höss

From Fred Jackson

I refer to Verrall's polemic letter and the excellent article by Gitta Sereny (NS 2 November). Although I feel that Verrall's outpourings are not worthy of a reply, I would make just one point in connection with Rudolf Höss, the Commandant of Auschwitz.

I belonged to the Field Security Section which arrested Höss in Schleswig-Holstein in 1946 and I was unfortunate enough to spend many hours with him, interrogating or just guarding him. The interrogations were carried out with strict impartiality and in accordance with the law and none of us could bear to touch him, far less beat him. Höss was a coward and his behaviour when captured certainly gave no impression of the arrogant SS Fuehrer he once was. He admitted, quite voluntarily and even proudly, that it was his job to exterminate Jews and other 'sub-humans' and as long as I live, I will never forget the phrase he used '*Meine beste Leistung war 10,000 Juden pro Tag*' (my best achievement was 10,000 Jews a day). He went into precise details of how it was done and he even claimed to have inaugurated the Auschwitz gas chamber.

Whatever Höss may have said later at Nuremberg or in Poland, the figures quoted in Mrs Sereny's article are the exact ones he gave us during this interrogation. All those involved were sick for weeks afterwards.

27 Forest Drive, Keston, Kent

Information sought

Esmond Romilly: particularly about his association with David Archer's bookshop at 4 Parton Street, London WC1, in the Thirties.

Kevin Ingram, Flat 3, 1 St Aubyn's, Hove

Frances Hodgkin: particularly her letters which will be treated with care and returned after copying.

J. E. Traue, Alexander Turnbull Library, PO Box 12-349, Wellington, New Zealand

Kenneth Tynan: letters, anecdotes, reminiscences and other biographical material.

Kenneth Tynan, 1500 Stone Canyon Road, Los Angeles, California 90024

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Afterthoughts

You will rejoice, I feel confident, to learn that the Christmas season at Appleton passed off with its customary restrained panache. I say 'restrained' because anything in the nature of boisterous behaviour would, in a group where the average age is comfortably into the seventies, be unsuitable. Decorum abounded. Nobody went too far. Manners were minded. Funny paper hats were worn sparingly. If I were one of those merry fellows who construct risible riddles for crackers and whom I always picture living in Pimlico bed-sitters, I would not hesitate to ask 'Why is refinement like a Christmas dinner?' and promptly supply the answer, 'Because there is/are good taste(s) everywhere!' Get it? Refinement, anyhow, was ours and Appleton was, I am happy to say, graced by the Bultitudes, not always amongst those present at this time of the year ('Cannes is *such* fun at Christmas, or, as they have it, *à Noël*'), the soul of hospitality as ever and deafening us all with cries of 'Who's for another noggin?' and 'Bottoms up!'

As to that Christmas dinner, 'Myrtlebank' is a household which rigorously excludes cranberry sauce as a fit companion to the turkey. Sixty years ago, few in this country had even heard of either chewing-gum or cranberry sauce, let alone chewed or munched them. They are both of them American immigrants that appear to have obtained a stranglehold on the affections of the foolish public. No professional footballer (and I now see that I have to add, to my horror, cricketer) seems able to play without that rhythmic action of the jaw that sadly indicates the presence of fragrant gum. And hosts and hostesses, anxious to be in what they, sheeplike, imagine to be the swim, provide their guests with cranberry-jammed sauce-boats. Not I. The only proper sauce to go with roast turkey is bread sauce and though I am not too keen at any time, particularly apple-pie time, on cloves, I understand that the onion that flavours the milk that makes the sauce (that lay in the house that Jack built) is better when a clove or two is stuck into it. I suppose that, like those sixth and seventh flutes in vast orchestras, you would notice them if they weren't there. I am, of course, taking it for granted that the bread sauce will be accompanied by sausages, small grilled bacon rolls, stuffing, gravy, roast potatoes and Brussels sprouts, this tasty vegetable being currently the only faintly cheering product available to us from plucky little Belgium's justly-renowned capital.

I opened my Christmas cards as they arrived and experienced the customary feeling of inadequacy and hurried several last-minute snow-capped firs and robins into the scheduled 'final posts', the dates of which as announced by the increasingly dictatorial and unhelpful Post Office seem to become earlier every year, but I will not dwell on postal shortcomings or the utterly inane full-page Radio Times advertisements for telegrams in the form of puerile jokes or the other really appalling and insulting idiocies such as Buzby, for this is thrombosis stuff and I refuse to conk out at Sir William Whatnot's expense, so to speak. Instead, let me turn to the very pleasing number of readers kind enough to write to me appreciatively about my article of a week or so ago on the London theatrical scene of 1925. They remember, they assure me, some of the musicals and plays that I mentioned 'as clearly as though it were yesterday', which is not really a very sound comparison because yesterday's activities are just the one thing that we golden oldies are unable to remember, though everything about 1925 shines brightly still in Memory's Treasure-Chest. One correspondent writes eagerly to ask what dear old Leslie Henson was in at that time, and the answer is *Tell Me More* at the Winter Garden, playing a costumier called Monty Sipkin employed in 'Maison Elise' and spooning, as we then called it, to Gershwin music with delightful Heather Thatcher who occasionally greatly startled audiences by suddenly sporting a monocle. The Winter Garden was unusual in that it had a Tuesday matinee (Gallery, 1s 3d), though the Apollo even had a Monday one, and business was so brisk for *Alf's Button* at the Princes (now wrongly called The Shaftesbury) that they had a daily one. Next question.

Happily situated, for the first ten years of my life, at Barnes in SW13 (lucky for some) and within easy bus-range of theatreland, I was parentally fortunate too for they were both keen theatre-goers and my mother was nearly as stage-struck as I (we were once lunching at The Ivy and Owen Nares came and sat next to us, upon which my mother almost swooned into her *omelette Arnold Bennett*). Together we would pore over the theatre lists in the *Morning Post* to see just which was the most attractive matinee for us to attend (we usually queued for the pit and thought nothing of waiting for two hours in order to bag front seats).

And one day at home there was a great flutter of excitement. Just as we were sitting down to our tea, our telephone rang, not in those days nearly as frequent an occurrence as now. My mother went to answer it and I, of course, listened, though not on this occasion to her usual fluent chat but to a succession of slightly embarrassed 'But . . .' and 'I think you . . .' and 'No I'm not'. She returned shortly after, pink-cheeked. 'You'll never guess who that was.' It seems that the Voice, and it deserves a capital letter, had said, without preamble, 'Sylvia, I've got you your seats for tonight. Just call for them at the box-office.' My mother, whose name was not Sylvia but Dorothy, had instantly recognised the caller, victim of this wrong number, a not unknown mishap then as now. She was a star indeed — Marie Tempest — and we lived on the thrilling happening for days. I had a pipe-dream and wish-fulfilment fantasy for some weeks that every famous player in London was going to ring us up by mistake — Godfrey Tearle, Gertie Millar, Dorothy Dickson, José Collins – and I hoped that it would be my mother who would answer. My father, though fond of the theatre, would have been a rather less excited and appreciative receiver of a wrong number from a celebrity ('Kindly get off our line. I might wish to call Harrods').

To forestall other kind correspondents anxious for the latest news of 1925, let me just run over a few more of the highlights of those giddy footlight nights. At Drury Lane you could hardly see the main characters in Basil Dean's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for exotic woodland scenery, fairies zooming about on wires, lighting effects (sunrise took a full five minutes), ballet dancers and real rabbits who, bemused by the verse and prose rolling round their ears from the lips of such renowned players as Robert Harris, Edith Evans and Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, peered despondently at the audience, thoroughly nonplussed and plainly wondering where on earth their next lettuce leaf was coming from. Elsewhere it was the heyday of the cosy, undemanding comedy and *The Sport of Kings* at the Savoy was from the pen of Ian Hay (does anybody still read him? Well worth a try, if not). The plot, as far as I can recall it from the side of the Upper Circle, centred round a lovable and innocent little mother (Mary Jerrold) who rang up a bookmaker in mistake for her coal merchant and ordered a hundredweight of Kitchen Nuts which, yes, yes, turns out to be also the name of a horse and she makes a thousand pounds. We *yelled*! Foreign royalty was not being neglected, with Ivor Novello appearing, and not yet very adequately, as His Hereditary Highness Prince Karl swotting away, a Bohemian at heart, at the university of *Old Heidelberg*, while at the Globe there was an imperious and exiled *Grand Duchess* being wooed at an hotel by an adoring young waiter (perfectly O.K. as he is really the Oxonian son of the Swiss President in disguise). And in two different plays (*Iris* and *The Ware Case*) in two different theatres (Adelphi and Wyndhams) Gladys Cooper and Gerald du Maurier were both defending their honours in different ways and for different reasons. Our choice, you will agree, was a wide one.

Roger Woddis

Nasty Turn

At the year's turning the Global Seismology Unit issued a questionnaire on the effects of the Carlisle earth tremor.

What were your thoughts
At the time of the 'quake?
(More of retreats than advances).
Were you reclining, asleep or awake?
Did window-frames rattle, or anything shake?
(Only belief in my chances).

What did you feel?
What odd sounds did you hear?
(A rumbling noise from Rhodesia).
Did you sense panic in anyone near?
What do you now most obsessively fear?
(Leaders with chronic amnesia).

When, if at all,
Did your house start to sway?
(Since the Afghan intrusions).
Did anything fall, or a ceiling give way?
Do you see cracks in the fabric today?
(Yes, and a wreck of illusions).

What of the future?
Write-off, perhaps?
(Largely a test of endurance).
What will you do if a cornerstone snaps?
How would you fend off the final collapse?
(Where can I take out insurance?)

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Christopher Hitchens

Fighting Jews

The Revolt by MENACHEM BEGIN *W. H. Allen* £6.95
The Rabin Memoirs by YITZHAK RABIN *Weidenfeld* £10
From These Men by SHIMON PERES *Weidenfeld* £8.50
The Israeli Mind by JOHN LAFFIN *Cassell* £5.95
The Elusive Peace: The Middle East in the Twentieth Century by WILLIAM R. POLK *Croom Helm* £7.95

The most cruel and intractable conflicts are those where both the contending parties feel themselves to be the oppressed and injured minority. In our time, to take two notable examples, this element of historical argument has made politics even more ferocious in Cyprus and in Ireland. But the conviction that history has done them wrong, that they are alone in the world, that they have powerful and unsleeping enemies, is strongest of all among the Jewish and the Arab inhabitants of what used to be the Palestine Mandate. To the Israeli, his own country looks and feels tiny; an area the size of Wales arrayed against a vast expanse of pan-Arab and pan-Islamic oil-money, weaponry and population. To the Palestinian living in Southern Lebanon, Israel is a superstate; an extension of American power and strength into the Middle East, and one which operates with extreme and deadly ruthlessness.

This clash of perspectives may appear symmetrical, but of course it is not. To many Palestinians, the case is a simple one of theft by *force majeure* – he used to have an orchard in the Galilee and now somebody from Milwaukee has taken it and changed its name. To a Western audience, it hardly needs emphasising that the Israelis do not see the birth of their state in that light (though it often needs emphasising that the Palestinians do).

All the volumes in this collection are written from Israeli standpoints of one kind or another (with the exception of William Polk's fine essay). One looks, then, for some echo of the tragedy and the drama of the Middle East. These books enable one to consider the different Israeli tones of voice.

Many Arabs believe that there is a Begin in every Israeli; that in some way he says and does what all Israelis would really like to say and do if they could. To put it mildly, such a view is a short measure on the truth. It might be right to say – as Begin does very clearly – that without his style and his methods the state of Israel would not have been born. The armed men of the Irgun Zvai Leumi might not have been 'typically Jewish' in the gentle and reflective sense of that term. They were, in fact, not at all decorative. Begin simply argues that it was they who turned the tide against the British occupation, and who succeeded in making the Arab inhabitants of Palestine evacuate their homes.

Begin's tone of voice is as awful as his prose – blustering, assertive, egocentric stuff. One sifts for nuggets and anecdotes, but even these are rare. A secret meeting with Arthur Koestler in a dark cellar while the author is on the run might seem like an absorbing tale, but Begin makes it boring because he tells the reader little of what was said and far too much of what was running through his own head at the time. In similar fashion, he clutters and obfuscates some potentially exciting accounts of the guerrilla war against the British with long bursts of self-justification and special pleading. A dash of introspection may not have been conducive to political and military leadership at the time, but it would have been useful in a memoir and very useful in the Prime Minister of the state of Israel.

Since Begin believes the Zionist cause to be endorsed by God and by the canonical texts, he lets himself off the task of explanation. His great obsession is with the idea of the 'Fighting Jew', who can put an end to his people's stereotype as passive and fatalistic victims. The creation of this national type has been Begin's life-work; from the days when he helped Jabotinsky against the Jewish Left in Thirties Poland, to the moment when he decreed the invasion of Lebanon to avenge a Palestinian guerrilla attack (which he denounced without irony as 'terrorist').

There is a great deal of scholarly dispute about Begin's account, through various editions of his memoirs, of the Dir Yassin massacre. All one can say for certain is this. The Arab inhabitants of that peaceful village were slaughtered. Begin gives away, perhaps, more than he intends when he says that Arab allegations of deliberate murder were false but useful to the prestige of his fighters. He goes on:

> Meanwhile the Haganah [Jewish armed forces] was carrying out successful attacks on the other fronts in Haifa. All the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter. The Arabs began fleeing in panic shouting: 'Dir Yassin!'

This is fairly unambiguous. Perhaps we could hear a little less henceforth about how the Arabs were duped into fleeing by their own leaders? But again, on the small matter of the tone of voice. Begin describes the operation in the typical clichés of relish which turn up in all military memoirs. So we have got the point that Jewish people can be as tough as the next race in their own cause. Could we also, then, hear a little less accusation of 'anti-semitism' when we review and criticise Israel as if it was just another state? Or can they have it both ways for ever?

There is an old and ghastly joke about an Israeli spokesman making the routine promise that 'Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East' and adding under his breath 'and we won't be the second either'. There comes a point, in this endless quest for 'security', where quantity turns into quality, and where 'objectively necessary' security measures amount to a whole posture of hostility to the Arabs on one hand and dependence on the Americans (of all people) on the other. Yitzhak Rabin likes the emollient and the half-truthful rather than the bragging and the arrogant. Here he is replying to the well-known accusation that he 'came out' for Nixon while Israeli ambassador in Washington:

> In that interview I noted that never in America's history had any President gone so far in his pro-Israeli declarations or in expressing America's commitment to Israel's security as President Nixon had . . . That was a fact – and at most I was bringing it to the attention of the Israeli, not the American, public. I truly cannot understand how my words could have been interpreted as a 'campaign speech' when the campaign had yet to begin and I was at any rate addressing myself to an audience that was not going to the polls.

Rabin's memoirs are like that – slippery and therefore revealing. Like Harold Wilson (whose writing style resembles his), he often wants to blame things on his colleagues. The luckless Shimon Peres once fell out with Rabin over an alleged leak of information concerning a secret Soviet contact with Israel about which one would like to hear more but

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learns nothing). Rabin's account of the affair, which involved subjecting his colleagues to lie-detector tests, ends like this: 'Considering the gravity of the problem, I found it curious that we were never able to get to the root of it.'

Rabin's open hostility to Peres is the small change of Israeli political gossip. Much of it seems to be personal. Rabin is centrally concerned with the problem of America, where he obviously thought himself better qualified to represent Israeli interests than Peres. The interesting thing, as one follows Rabin through this long, tedious and businesslike narrative of negotiations, is that the more Israel comes to depend on the United States, the less the two countries seem to trust each other. This paradox, which enhances the Israeli conviction of being alone in the world, is very baffling for Arabs (and not just for them). Still, at least one can see how irritating Peres must be by reading his own book.

His cameos of Israeli life and leadership are mainly *schmaltz*: 'The Most Unforgettable People I've Met', from the pen of the one-time 'Minister for the Administered (sic) Territories'. Such gooey pen-portraits, of Ben-Gurion and Eshkol, Bergmann and Haviv, add little to our existing knowledge. The chapter on Yonatan Netanyahu, martyr of the Entebbe raid, consists mainly of a eulogy delivered by Peres at the boy's grave. Even Max Hastings, whose own account of Netanyahu was also published by Lord Weidenfeld, found on examination that he had not quite been the Zionist Galahad of legend and song. No hint of that here – all the characters are much larger than mere life.

'Generally kibbutzniks are irreverent.' That is a typical John Laffin sentence, combining all his best-known qualities: the cliché, the meaningless statement, the windiness which infects even his most apparently succint passages. Anybody who has read *The Arab Mind* or (more recently from the same pen) *The Dagger of Islam* will know what to expect. The whole is an unsorted box of clippings, author's anecdotes and mid-Atlantic 'insights'. Not worth the detour. Avoid.

The shelves of books on Israeli *élan* are all rather beside the point. Everybody knows that Israel has a capacity to motivate and to mobilise its citizens – a resource which many larger states would give great revenues to possess. But can there be circumstances where this flair is a weakness? It's possible to argue, and some Israelis do believe, that the *blitzkrieg* victory of June 1967 was a deadly and deceptive 'high'. Then, if ever, would have been the time to make a settlement with the Palestinians. But the sensation of invincibility was so strong, and so irresistible to the politicians, that it led to *hubris* and from that to the ghastly entanglements of today. It would be nice to report that Begin or Rabin or Peres had written reflectively on this irony. (It would be astonishing if it had occurred to John Laffin.) But alas . . .

William Polk is a real pleasure to read after all this *schlock*. He has a genuine historical approach, and an easy thoughtful style. He also has a very fair and inquiring mind. Nobody with intelligent preconceptions could finish the book without at least re-examining them. New readers should begin here.

Polk begins by slaying a few obvious canards. He establishes the conflict as an ancient one, involving a conflict of rights as well as of nations. He reviews the literature and the arguments of both sides in a critical fashion (including the memoirs of Begin and Sadat, about both of which he is more indulgent than I could be).

He is a great puncturer of illusions including (he was an emissary to the region for Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon) those of his own side. Discussing the Camp David accords, he feels bound to point out that the American desire to make Sadat 'their man' has inhibited any serious appraisal of the chances of peace. And, while he has considerable sympathy for the Palestinians, he subjects their more idealistic and impractical propaganda to a fairly tough analysis. I can't remember a better general book on the whole region, and recommend it most heartily. Compliments also to Croom Helm, a small outfit who have risked a lot on publishing worthy and useful books in this field. If only the richer houses felt able to do the same – but here are 30 quid's worth that say different.

Blake Morrison

Yous & Is & Doths & Thees

Houseboat Days by JOHN ASHBERY *Penguin* £1.50
Moortown by TED HUGHES *Faber* £5.25 & £1.95
Growing Up by MICHAEL HOROVITZ *Allison & Busby* £4.95 & £2.50

It is easy to see why John Ashbery still meets such resistance in this country. The qualities his work is renowned for – obscurity, self-referentiality, spaciousness of form – aren't, on the face of it, very attractive ones. And even when he comes close to traditions we can understand, the promised points of contact often prove illusory: he has been influenced (as Harold Bloom keeps telling us) by American Romantics like Whitman and Stevens, but his work's 'bitter impression of absence' is not theirs; he's 'painterly', but paints like an Abstract Expressionist, not figuratively; he 'puts himself into his work', as Lowell and Berryman did, but unlike them gives nothing tangible away ('please no talk of openness' as his 'Tenth Symphony' puts it).

For many years he was simply ignored in this country, and the celebration of him 'over there' dismissed by both critics and publishers as an example of American poor taste; and even now that his two most recent collections have been published here – *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* by Carcanet in 1976, and *Houseboat Days* as a new venture into the publication of single contemporary volumes by Penguin – awkward questions of the kind 'they' would never ask will continue to be posed, most pertinent among them: isn't life too short to spend time on a poet who is not in the normal sense of the word intelligible, who by his own admission veers away from meaning whenever there seems some likelihood of reaching it?

This is not a philistine question, nor an inconsiderable one; on the contrary, almost any passage selected from Ashbery's work requires one to ask it:

> 'The skin is broken. The hotel breakfast china
> Poking ahead to the last week in August,
> not really
> Very much at all, found the land where you
> began . . .'
> The hills smouldered up blue that day, again
> You walk five feet along the shore, and you duck
> As a common heresy sweeps over. We
> can botanize
> About this for centuries, and the little dazey
> Blooms again in the cities . . .

These are the opening lines of the title poem, and if we're going to learn anything in *Houseboat Days* it ought to be here. It looks, in places, as if we might do: there's a sense of time ('that day') and of place ('the hills'); there are a 'you' and a 'we', soon – we assume – to be identified; even the notion of heresy sweeping through the air can be let pass as a somewhat fanciful (and comical) piece of personification. But just as we think we have some bearings, Ashbery disorientates us. Time and place shift; the 'you' and 'we', far from being identified, are joined by equally puzzling hes and Is and yous, the voices in the poem remaining anonymous; and the oddities already there in the spelling of 'dazey' and the poking ahead of breakfast china (is this some note from a deranged person?) are added to as the poem unwinds.

It's no wonder that we're baffled, British readers especially so. For the post-1945 Movement-and-Group tradition has accustomed us to a very opposite kind of poem, one which resolves all the tensions within it and wins through to rational statement. Whereas Ashbery is defeated by experience, and finds that, as he has said, 'something that started out clearly suddenly becomes opaque'. Readers who go to his poetry for some readily comprehensible insight into human affairs are likely to come away feeling cheated. They may even feel that they know less than when they started out – as 'Houseboat Days' itself puts it 'You don't see until/It's all over how little there was to learn'.

Ashbery's skill first in preventing us from seeing how little there is to learn, and then finally in persuading us that it doesn't matter, is what makes his poetry so pleasurable. A lack of argument is played off against an abundance of arguing words, so that he seems to be going somewhere even when he isn't; and his opposition to a closed, rational poetry manifests itself not, as have so many previous alternatives, through jaggedness and fragmentation, but through a fluid rhythm and syntax which gather up all the disparate elements that come their way. *Houseboat Days* isn't as strong a collection as *Self-Portrait*, but it presents a stimulating challenge to our reading habits, reminding us that our reaching after 'fact and reason' may be as irritable as Keats said.

Ted Hughes's last collection *Remains of Elmet*, did much to check the view that from *Crow* onwards his work has been deteriorating. It wasn't just that his description seemed more under control – curlews 'hang(ing) their harps over the misty valleys', the hills

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'armadas about to set out'. There was also Hughes's powerful feeling for the Calder Valley: the charting of its decline and the affection shown towards inhabitants like the 'Crown Point Pensioners' were something quite new and unexpected in a poet who'd never previously shown much empathy for humans or their history. This healthy development is in some measure consolidated in *Moortown*: his poems about a farm-labourer, an auctioneer, a tramp have a surprising warmth. There is also, though, the half-baked existentialism and numskull historicising of 'A Motorbike' (I would guess a much earlier poem), which describes the death of a young motorcyclist. Here is Hughes's version of Britain in the years after 1945:

> Peace took them all prisoner.
> They were herded into their home towns.
> A horrible privation began
> Of working a life up out of the avenues
> And the holiday resorts and the dance-halls.
>
> Then the morning bus was as bad as any
> labour truck,
> The foreman, the boss, as bad as the S.S. . . .
> And the sameness of the next town
> . . . as bad as electrified barbed wire.

There are similar worries with 'Foxhunt'; the creature which trotted so delicately into Hughes's imagination in 'The Thought-Fox' is here ruthlessly hunted down, deprived of its freedom not so much by hounds as by the author himself, whose anti-hunt propagandising hasn't, in any case, Wilde's flair for epigram: 'A machine with only two products:/ Dog-shit and dead foxes' does not have the ring of 'the unspeakable in full pursuit of the uneatable'.

And yet the title sequence which opens *Moortown* is on the whole Hughes back to his best. Quickly written and hardly revised, the sequence is a kind of dairy-diary, a journal of everyday life and livestock. Though there are moments of pleasure and relief, life on the Hughes farm is predominantly struggle: the animals won't co-operate; the tractor can only be started after a titanic fight with 'shackle-pins bedded in cast-iron cow-shit'; and activities like shearing and dehorning are much messier than city-folk might suppose:

> the wire pulls through
> the last hinge of hair, the horn is heavy and free,
> And a water-pistol jet of blood
> Rains over the one who holds it – a needle jet
> From the white-rasped and bloody skull-crater.

It's in the poems about birth (and there's an extraordinary rate of lambing and calving on this farm) that Hughes is at his best: the delicacy of the new-born brings out his own delicacy. Some editing might have helped: after the first half-dozen similes for afterbirth – jelly, jetsam, plastic apron, tent-rope, tattered banner, flag (these last two considerably less striking once one's seen the 'wretched flag' in Elizabeth Bishop's 'A Cold Spring') – Hughes understandably enough runs out of new ones. But what's impressive about these poems is that they touch on fundamental issues of birth, life, work, death, without ever losing sight of a familiar, knowable world: the description of a mother and her calf lying 'face to face like two mortally wounded duellists' has its metaphysical implications, but there's an immediate physicality too.

Sadly, this lesson is not learnt throughout the rest of *Moortown*, where Hughes breaks open the myth-kitty, brings out a predictable cast of Prometheus, Adam, etc. There's an arbitrariness about it all nicely summed up in a poem entitled 'Life is trying to be life' which begins 'Death is also trying to be life'. In these wham-bam dealings with polarities and paradox everything can equally well be its opposite – the grave wants to be a cradle, the cradle wants to be a grave, and I want to read something else.

Dear old Michael Horovitz. The Hockney cover for *Growing Up* has the one-time *enfant terrible* sitting there rather like a granny, and it certainly seems a lifetime ago since he was scandalising the academies with his claims to be leader of a new generation of William Blakes. More and more Horovitz looks like a 19th-century Romantic who's lost his way: for all the 1960ish leaping between milkbottle-on-the-doorstep banalities on the one hand and portentous on-first-taking-mescalin psychedelia on the other ('scarlet lake guitars/erupt their excalibur', that sort of thing) what really define him are the old-style doths and thees and Os and whilsts. It would be as foolish to feel threatened by his mixture of good fun and bad form as to think it of any real importance.

Charles Fox

The Sin in Syncopation

Jazz Away From Home by CHRIS GODDARD
Paddington £7.50

In some parts of Africa it is considered obscene to dance with one arm around your partner's waist. The proper thing there is precisely that swivelling of hips and buttocks which, when transported to America by the slaves, provoked much tut-tutting. To be fair, the commotion really arose at the start of this century, when white Americans began taking over, but in politer guise, such dances as the Grizzly Bear, the Bunny Hug, even (one does forget its bestial assocations) the Fox Trot. Moral Leagues denounced both the dances and the music that went with them: 'Who put the sin in syncopation?' (Even as late as the 1950s American television preferred to show Elvis Presley in action only from the waist up.) Sousa's Band brought the Cake-walk to Paris in 1900; Bert Williams and George Walker popularised it in London three years later in the show *In Dahomey*. Soon all the smartest clubs had ragtime trios. By 1913 British music halls were even being invaded by acts like Miss Olive Tempest with – as one reviewer put it – 'her clever and astonishing Thought-Reading Ragtimers'.

Jazz arrived during the first world war. Ragtime bands turned into jazz bands overnight, usually by getting somebody to clatter about on a drum-kit. In 1919 Europe received its first taste of real jazz with the arrival of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (they played for 5,800 people at the opening night of the Hammersmith Palais) and Will Marion Cook's Southern Syncopated Orchestra. The latter featured comic songs and spirituals in a repertoire that leaned upon ministrelsy, but it did include a great jazz soloist, Sidney Bechet (he was acclaimed by Ernest Ansermet as 'this artist of genius' in what was arguably the first piece of serious jazz criticism). Like Bechet, the Original Dixielanders came from New Orleans, but they were white and short on blues feeling, although adept at serving up exciting, instant jazz.

Chris Goddard's book is really about how long it took Europeans to adjust to what was a momentous shift in popular culture. He diagnoses, very correctly, that it was the dancing that got across first. Not just the social dances – the Charleston, the Black Bottom – but the virtuosity of dancers in the black revues. Their rhythmic improvising won applause from audiences which had yet to grasp the subtleties of the music going on in the background. Europeans were not alone in this. White New Yorkers behaved in exactly the same way at black shows on Broadway – and, later, at the Cotton Club. Goddard proffers a remarkable statistic to prove that ignorance of jazz even crossed the colour-line. As late as 1920, he suggests, the majority of black musicians were still not jazz players.

Perhaps the Original Dixielanders boasted too much about their musical illiteracy (it was an easy way of getting publicity), but certainly the finest of the early jazz musicians all came from the South and had what were then regarded as highly illegitimate techniques. Similarly, unlike their counterparts in New York and Washington, they were mostly working-class. Blues, in particular, was looked on as a very low-class music. Indeed, one of Goddard's theories is that Django Reinhardt became the first major European jazz soloist because he was a gypsy, living, like the Afro-American, within a culture yet not part of it. (If logic demands to know the whereabouts of all the other gypsy jazzmen, it is worth remembering that *cante hondo,* Europe's closest equivalent to Negro blues, was the creation of Spanish gypsies.)

Now and again Goddard gives the impression of berating Europeans out of habit as much as conviction (an epilogue about the 1977 Nice Festival is strangely ambivalent). Europe, after all, provided – in Hugues Panassié – the first delineator of a jazz aesthetic, however faulty. And European straight composers were scarcely less laggardly than the Americans at making use of ragtime and jazz. Oddly enough, Goddard fails to mention William Walton, but compensates for that by giving a fascinating account of Ravel's eagerness to learn. Once a week for five years, between 1924 and 1928, Ravel had a weekly session with the French trombonist, Leo Vauchant, perhaps the first European jazz musician of genuine stature. And Vauchant turns out to be only one of a large number of French and American musicians to be interviewed by Goddard in the course of his researching.

The book really stops at the end of the 1920s, although many of the illustrations

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by Christopher Hitchens
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inhabit the following decade. There are, therefore, photos of quite a few musicians who fail to get a mention in the text (a plus-foured Garnet Clark, for instance, that brilliant pianist who died – at 24 – in a French asylum). For connoisseurs of the period there are snapshots of titled revellers hobnobbing with Bricktop or Salvador Dali (Goddard points out that the early chicness of the Quintet of the Hot Club of France came about largely because their music was quiet, never interfering with the chatter). Our elevenmonths monarch is shown with the Duchess of Windsor, but not, alas, behind a drum-kit. (Dave Tough once let him sit in; questioned later by Bud Freeman about how the princeling shaped, tough replied: 'He might make a good king'.) And surely the 'unknown friend' with Bobby Martin and Kaiser Marshall at Longchamps (page 43) is Rass Prince Monolulu, renowned in the 1930s for his ostrich plumes and his racing tips.

Nigel Bracher

Climate of Terror

The Press in Argentina 1973-8 by ANDREW GRAHAM-YOOLL *Writers & Scholars Educational Trust* £5

Cultural Policy in Argentina by EDWIN R. HARVEY *Unesco* £3.75

In Latin America, an area of the world where most political parties are banned or emasculated, the press finds itself in the firing line. It either protects itself and the established powers by self-censorship and adherence to decrees, or it acts as an unofficial opposition by attempting to exercise its responsibility as a free press in the face of appalling odds. Many journalists have died in what has become literally an information war.

Perhaps the most notorious case of the murder of a journalist was when Vladimir Herzog was tortured to death at the Second Army Headquarters, São Paolo, Brazil in 1975. Since that date countless journalists have died, 'disappeared' or been deprived of their civil rights throughout Latin America. In the last two months alone Consuelo de Montejo, editor of *El Bogotano*, was 'detained' at a military base in Colombia; Helio Fernandes, editor of the Rio de Janeiro daily *Tribuna da Imprensa* survived a car bomb attack; Victor Porter of the *Buenos Aires Herald* was arrested as a member of the Montoneros guerrillas; Alcibiades González Delvalle, the Secretary General of the Union of Paraguayan Journalists, was detained under the state of siege regulations, and José Leon Castaneda, the leader of the Guatemalan Journalists' Union, was murdered by right-wing terrorists. And now Robert Cox, the embattled and courageous editor of the *Buenos Aires Herald*, has finally left Argentina after repeated death threats.

A first-hand account of the climate of terror under which journalists work in Latin America has been written by Andrew Graham-Yooll, news editor of the *Buenos Aires Herald* until 1976 when he left Argentina to stay alive. His book is an important document in the history of press censorship and the more valuable for being the only work in English on the Latin American press; for Argentina presents a model of the worst that can happen to an established and sophisticated press anywhere in the world.

Over the last seven years, as the corrupt and venal governments of Péron and his wife have given way to a repressive regime of General Videla, as hyper-inflation touching 440% has led to extremists taking violent action in an attempt to find a radical solution to mismanagement and misgovernment, Argentina may be said to be a State of Chaos. Against this background, where the violation of human rights is almost index linked to economic instability, the free press has found itself under attack from all sides.

If a paper publishes 'anti-government propaganda' – such as the exposure of official corruption, the reporting of a terrorist incident or simply an editorial on the state of the economy – at best its advertising revenues would be severely reduced, at worst, its personnel would be arrested and tortured, or murdered by paramilitary 'death squads'. The alternative is to toe the line, to submit to what Graham-Yooll calls 'self-censorship', 'which has left the press tainted with the failure to meet its responsibility to supply information in any situation and any emergency'. Some papers, however, notably the *Buenos Aires Herald* and *La Opinión*, have resisted the temptation to 'obey and survive', at some cost: 'news editors thought not so much of the contents of the next day's paper as of what they might find on the way home each night'.

The authorities have had various ways of dealing with the rebel or 'resistance' press. In the late Sixties General Onganía nationalised a small news agency, 'Telam', which became the state news agency in control of all government advertising. As the state is Argentina's largest advertiser, by the simple expedient of withholding advertising revenues the government could and did cripple many opposition newspapers.

When corruption and mismanagement was at its height under the influence of José López Rega, a former NCO and Svengali to María Estela Péron, the influence of 'Telam' was buttressed by official decree. In 1973 the international news agencies UPI and AP were banned from reporting on domestic news for the use of Argentine papers. A year later another decree made it an imprisonable offence to carry any reports on subversive or terrorist activities. This effectively stopped the reporting of 'disappearances' and other security excesses unless officially announced by government spokesmen. By the time Videla came to power in 1976, editors were forbidden 'to enter fields which are not for public debate' and instructed to 'foster the restitution of fundamental values which contribute to the integrity of society; such as: order – labour – hierarchy, responsibility etc.'

If, in spite of this array of censorship laws, journalists persist in anti-government activities there remains the option of terrorising them into obedience. When, in 1973, the newspaper *Clarín* published critical gossip about Péron, his wife and López Rega, its offices were attacked by machine gun fire and incendiary grenades, and two employees were severely wounded.

As well as attacks on newspaper offices and printing works, there have been individual attacks on journalists which, after the torture and murder of Jorge Money, a financial journalist on *La Opinión* in 1974 became so commonplace that they were no longer considered newsworthy.

Foreign correspondents are not exempt from harassment either. Philippe Labreveux of *Le Monde* had to leave Argentina after death threats, Edouard Bailby of *L'Express* and Luc Bandarel of *Der Bund* were expelled and Luis Guagnini of *Latin American Political Report* was arrested by police and subsequently 'disappeared'. All criticism from abroad, including reports from Amnesty International and *Index on Censorship*, has been dismissed by authorities as Marxist-inspired.

Graham-Yooll's book goes up to 1978 and the information war he describes is far from over – but with the departure of Robert Cox from Argentina the chances of a victory for the free press are negligible.

However, for incurable optimists Graham-Yooll's account is flatly contradicted by a UNESCO publication 'Cultural Policy in Argentina 1979', by E. R. Harvey, Professor of Cultural Policy at the Universidad Nacional de la Plata. Either Professor Harvey is an ardent supporter of the military government or he has been blackmailed or threatened into writing a panegyric. UNESCO who sponsored his work and published it in their series 'Studies on Cultural Policies', have been careful to issue a disclaimer that 'the author's opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of UNESCO.' It would be outrageous if they did.

Harvey begins by explaining the Orwellian relation between the state and culture, without a trace of irony:

> The Ministry of the Interior has authority in regard to institutional questions concerning the right of free expression of ideas, which is a basic condition in any planned or spontaneous process of cultural development . . . The Ministry of the Economy is also involved in the formulation, implementation and control of policy and the general system applicable to the producers of cultural objects and services.

He goes on to describe the functions of the National Culture Secretariat and the Public Information Secretariat, and quotes approvingly from Article 14 of the Constitution 'which provides that all inhabitants of the country shall enjoy among other individual rights the right to publish their ideas in the press without prior censorship'. It seems incredible that in 1979 under the auspices of UNESCO anyone could write such fantasy. In the first two years of Videla's government 70 journalists were arrested or imprisoned, 40 journalists disappeared and 29 journalists were murdered.

The only valuable section of Harvey's otherwise worthless study is a table showing the reading habits of the Argentinians from 1971 to 1975. During those four toubled years the circulation of educational papers and periodicals fell by 2.3 million while that of comics rose by 11.6 million – a tribute to the effectiveness of censorship in Argentina.

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Bottom of the Night

PETER LEVI reviews Faithful Ruslan **by GEORGII VLADIMOV translated by Michael Glenny** *(Cape £4.95)*. **NICOLE ZAND interviews VLADIMOV.**

A powerful allegory worked through in detail to every last consequence will take on a life of its own, a realism, a moral passion and an understanding, that we hardly find elsewhere. To enter into the soul of a guard dog at the temporary closure of the Siberian concentration camps under Khrushchev is a brilliant device. Guard-dogs are materialists, atheists, idealistic, terribly disciplined. Their virtues are terrifying. And in the end they are victims. That makes them an interesting counterpart to the subhuman, human world.

But *Faithful Ruslan* goes far beyond this mere device. By the pressure of insistence and variation, by many twists and turns of plot, this book captures as much of reality as Zhemyatin or Bulgakov or Solzhenitsyn. It is sparely written and strongly constructed. Its intensity is the equivalent of poetry. He relaxes only just enough to create a character as haunting as Ivan Denisovich, that of the Shabby Man. Much of the text made me in my turn want to howl like a dog. I felt it to be terribly truthful.

How can a reader here know that a novel about Siberia is truthful? Because of its genuineness, sentence by sentence and chapter by chapter, which we recognize in any language, even in the *Iliad*. And because it fits what we know, and it explains only by describing. Things must have been like this, not in the souls of dogs but in those of human beings. Understanding the modern history of Russia is a painful process. It is worthwhile rubbing in that that involves our own history also. Not everyone in those camps was there without the applause of people in the West I have personally known; not everyone was there without British government connivance in 1945. We are among those who exploited Faithful Ruslan.

Vladimov has taken the stern advice of Auden to poets, to 'follow right to the bottom of the night'. The courage and the intellectual means to tell the truth about this catastrophic burden have not been common, even in Russia. I admire his clarity and force as a writer, the restraint of his devices and the breadth and power of his imagination. The worst scenes are very lightly etched in, but with acid. Vladimov was born in 1931, as I was, and I noticed with great interest that he was excited at the beginning of the Sixties, as we were in the late Fifties, by *The Catcher in the Rye*. He is obviously, from his career, a most conscious literary craftsman, and *Faithful Ruslan* has gone through several versions to reach the length it now has, that of a short novel. Every effect in the book is under control. I read it at a sitting, I found it impossible to put down. It is a masterpiece, and unforgettable I think.

One of the impressions it makes is that of the appalling inconsequence of people's lives, and the terrifying disorder of their survival. In this country we are used to survivors of Nazi persecution in whose lives there was only one period of black tragedy, not always very long prolonged. There is a kind of orderliness about that. Our moral outlook, with whatever elements of truth and illusion, can somehow cope with it. But the Shabby Man is an innocent conscript, captured by the Germans and transferred at once by Stalin's general order to the freezing and hellish labour camp. He is then amnestied in midwinter, with no money, no house, no pension and no job. His family believe or hope he died long ago. What will happen to him next? And yet he survives. His character has a fuggy warmth and he sees things more clearly than outsiders. He and Ruslan befriend one another, not without ironic misunderstandings. They are the opposite sides of a coin, in a way.

The astounding moral force of this book, its savage ironies, and its intellectual elegance, convinced many Russians when it was first anonymously circulated that it was written by Solzhenitsyn. It does read like the early mature work of a great writer. Vladimov has not been published in the Soviet Union for eight years now. But I find it impossible to believe that a writer of such power would ever give up. He is too intelligent for that. I must make it clear that what has so gripped me is not his courage or his anger but his towering stature as a writer.

The following is a shortened version of an interview between Nicole Zand *and* Georgii Vladimov, *which appeared in* Le Monde *(5 January 1979). The interview has been translated from the French by* Michael Glenny.

VLADIMOV: I began writing *Faithful Ruslan* in 1963, after *Novy Mir* published Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. At last we could write about the prison camps. Alexander Tvardovsky (editor of *Novy Mir*) read my story, and advised me to expand it. When [in 1965, after Khrushchev was ousted] I presented my revised version, they said: 'Why did you take so long over it? It's too late now.' It was then that someone read *Ruslan*, copied it and started circulating it . . .

[*Ruslan*] became well known in *samizdat*, but after 1973 I saw that the authorities were clamping down again. My friends were starting to have their work discreetly published in the West. Realising that the only alternatives for me were *samizdat* or publication in the West, I recast the novel as if the censorship didn't exist. But I dated it 1963-1965, because that was when Stalin's prison camps were finally closed, when the wretched guard dogs found themselves out of a job and one could believe in a Russia freed from the crushing weight of Gulag. We didn't know then that new camps were being created: we thought it was all over.

In 1974 I sent this new *Ruslan* to the émigré publishing house Possev, and it was published in Russian . . .

ZAND: Like it or not, you have become a 'dissident'. What does it mean? How did it happen?

VLADIMOV: Dis-sid-ent . . . You know, I think I've always been one of those people who asked awkward questions, hence a malcontent. It began in 1966, when we wrote a letter supporting Sunyavsky and Daniel . . . Up till then I was an 'official' writer, a member of the Union of Writers; I worked on *Novy Mir*. Then suddenly they stuck a label on us: 'Anti-Soviet' . . .

[In 1975] *Ruslan* was published in the West. For this, the Soviet authorities generally demand some act of contrition: you have to write in a newspaper that the manuscript was purloined from you, that you have refused all payment for it, that the maddened dogs in the story represent CIA agents, etc. . . . My Norwegian publisher invited me to visit the Frankfurt Book Fair. The Union of Writers withheld this invitation from me. I told myself that I could not belong to a Union which behaved in that fashion, so I wrote to them: 'I am leaving you. Goodbye.' The letter was published abroad, and that infuriated them. They started to do everything they could do to force me to leave the country . . . I got this 'invitation' to go to Israel, sent to me by a total stranger. I have never wanted to emigrate – and now they are offering to let me go. At once. Yet there are people who are longing to go and never get an invitation.

ZAND: Don't you want to leave your country?

VLADIMOV: No, I do not. I can only be a Russian writer. I was born here; I don't see how I could live in the West and still be a writer.

The novelist ought to live with his characters and share their fate. Of course, those of us who have emigrated are freer, but gradually their link with Russia is broken; after two or three years they acquire a Western cast of mind. And little by little the specifically Russian outlook fades . . .

Nevertheless I have the feeling that our society is sick. Take my case, for example. What does it signify? What good does it do them for me to leave the Union of Writers . . . for foreign radio and newspapers to talk about me? Why all this fuss? Why all the harassment, why am I followed everywhere, why all these threatening 'phone calls? It would have been far cheaper for the State to have let me spend a week in Frankfurt, especially since I promised to give no interviews . . . But a sick society needs to dominate the individual, to reduce him to total submission, to humiliate him so that he doesn't rebel.

And it doesn't only happen to writers: ordinary workers come from far away to see me. There was a teacher – decorated for bravery – who suddenly blurted out to me 'What can I tell my pupils? Why does Brezhnev give himself medals? If I lie to them, I lose their trust in me.'

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Man cannot live in a world of lies. In the end he has to stand up and say what he really thinks. And then he is stamped with the infamous brand: 'Dissident', his telephone is tapped, the post office no longer delivers his letters, they put sugar in his petrol-tank . . . In the shops of my district, people's behaviour has changed; wherever I go people look askance at me. It is a way of directing their discontent at *me*! . . . In the end, it inevitably affects one's state of mind. One feels isolated, full of self-doubt, weakened, shattered . . .

Tom Paulin

Ceremony on the Border

I see the women come walking
From the town of the white river-meadow.
Their eyes are a silk fragrance;
Their ritual must appease
The squat god, Terminus.

One is shy and delicate
As she carries a bowl of wine;
And another, in the spirit's beauty,
Will transfigure the hard god
With honey on a green leaf.

He hunches at the stone bridge,
The crude lord of limits
In his blocked sangar. His raw
Fur is grey and hackled,
His broody vigilance

The shadow of all judgment.
Rain and lichens
Have weathered him, and now
He squats like an institution.
Useful, half-wise, no longer young.

Honeyed wine and spicy cakes,
A fluid light and a fine
Twist of air – a song is rising
To a gold, bellied sail.
Hear that sweet voice in the rough waste.

Blake Morrison

Rustic Song

'the idiocy of rural life'

The farmer's illiterate – daubs in red
on the backs of sheep D D D D . . .

When the flock drives hillwards like cumuli,
his useless dog lies down every few yards.

Old Ned, meanwhile, dreams of a
ploughman's lunch:
bouffant loaf, blue stilton like some bad
disease.

What idiots these rustics! Even the squire
cannot explain why dark brown platters

lie here in the grass, and little black olives.
Still, there is always a song to be heard –

pipings of lark, the curlew's *stringendo*,
and fences made into musical scores:

five lines and a bar, they are silent mostly,
but waterdrops hang like tiny breves.

Ronald Hayman

Easy Breather

An Actor and his Time by JOHN GIELGUD *Sidgwick & Jackson* £8.95
The Actor's Ways and Means by MICHAEL REDGRAVE *Heinemann* £1.50

How much truth can an anecdote tell? One of the main troubles with theatrical biographies (including mine of Gielgud) is that they have to rely so heavily on interviews with actors who seldom have any clear recollection of what happened in rehearsal to make a performance take this or that shape, but who have good memories for stories with punchlines, and have an over-developed instinct to reach for the nearest laugh.

Both as an actor and as a talker John Gielgud is in the Noel Coward tradition. 'You're the touring rights of me,' Coward grumbled after seeing him in *Musical Chairs*: 'Stop it!' But we can only feel glad that he didn't stop it and still produces such sentences as 'I found myself signing cheques like Ludwig of Bavaria'. Or this one describing Granville-Barker after he took to hyphenating his name: 'This was all very different from the young genius, eating nuts and wearing sandals, acting and directing in London, intensely violent and passionate.'

Gielgud can gossip fluently and engagingly about a startlingly large galaxy of personalities from Ellen Terry and Mrs Patrick Campbell to Marlon Brando and Tony Richardson. Certainly it was a good idea to set him down in front of a BBC microphone with no brief except to reminisce about his life and no prodding except a few gentle questions. It was also a good idea to edit the results into a sumptuously illustrated book which can be recommended unhesitatingly. But the misleading title matters more with the book than it did with the broadcasts. These anecdotes tell us very little about the 75 years Gielgud has lived through, and, tantalisingly, even less about him as an actor.

For looking at other actors' performances, the stage is a fine vantage point, and no offstage observer has written more vividly than Gielgud. He is almost equally interesting on performances he saw only from the auditorium, such as Sybil Thorndike's Saint Joan. But about his own work he is modest to the point of being uncommunicative. In his Old Vic *Antony and Cleopatra*, he tells us, he padded his doublet and wore a false beard 'and shouted and boomed, and achieved some sort of result'. As a speaker of Shakespearean verse Gielgud is still unrivalled. Paul Scofield admires his technique 'which seems in the same instant to search for form and to rest in a civilised certainty'. But it's useless to look in this book for clues to how this effect is produced. 'I have always had easy breath control,' he tells us, laconically evasive.

Nor do we get more than good anecdotes – which he has mostly told many times before – about the charismatic actors and directors he has worked with, or the writers he has known. The amorous bald Russian director Komisarjevsky sits under a grand piano in Constance Spry's country house using a pudding basin

filled with candle grease for telling the fortune of the female novelist he fancies. Baroness Blixen shows Gielgud where she wants to be buried. 'But I mustn't tell the priest because my favourite dog is already buried there.' Esmé Percy, when his glass eye falls out during a performance of *The Lady's Not For Burning*, says under his breath to the actor who steps forward to pick it up: 'Oh do be careful, don't tread on it, they cost £8 each.'

John Miller and John Powell have, on the whole, done a good editorial job, though one of them should have reminded Gielgud that he played Shaw's Caesar at Chichester, and that Montherlant's *Le Maître de Santiago* isn't a one-act play. But these are quibbles. The book will give a great deal of pleasure.

Michael Redgrave's *The Actor's Ways and Means* will not give so much, which wouldn't matter if it provided more inside information about ways and means to great performances. A transcript of four lectures given at Bristol University Drama Department, the book first appeared in 1953, when Method acting was arousing even more bewilderment than admiration, and when little had been published in this country about Stanislavsky. Redgrave draws more frequently and more interestingly on quotations from other actors than on his own experience, while his argument is desultorily developed. Compared with Richard Boleslavsky's *The First Six Lessons in Acting*, the book is unhelpful and – more surprisingly – charmless. It's hard to see why it should be reissued without any attempt at updating.

NOTE

The NEW STATESMAN wishes to congratulate Sir Michael Tippett on his 75th birthday – 2 January 1980. Andrew Clements will be reviewing celebratory concerts and new critical books on the composer in a forthcoming issue.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Less Faith in Concrete

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE on the theatre of the decade

Early in the 1970s I went to the opening of a West End comedy so awesomely wet I felt sure it would croak by publication day and didn't even bother to review it. A week later, surprised at the length of its death agonies, I committed myself in print to the view that a civilised public couldn't conceivably support it for more than another few days. The name of that failure was *No Sex Please, We're British*, the 'longest running comedy in the world': a wincing reminder, every time I pass the Strand, both of my own fallibility and of the intransigence of sheer mediocrity. Indeed, a critic who (naming no names) had slept out the decade could awake in 1980 and, as far as the commercial theatre was concerned, imagine he'd backtracked through time. Who could have predicted that *Hello Dolly*, *My Fair Lady*, *The King and I*, *Oliver*, *Not Now Darling* and *Rookery Nook* would be the staples of our West End at Christmas, 1979?

No doubt it would be an exaggeration to suggest that those cultural ecologists whose 1970s were spent fighting for the save-our-theatres campaign were actually in the pollution business. All the same, historians of the future are bound to see the decade as the one in which the British subsidised theatre unequivocally became *the* British theatre. Foreign tourists helped the impresarios, keeping some of their leakier vessels safely afloat and even encouraging such as Michael Codron and Michael White to take the odd navigational risk; but their numbers rose and fell with our unpredictable pound, and, in any case, they were hardly very friendly to the unusual, provocative and/or difficult. Take Ayckbourn, Bennett, two-thirds of Gray, and a little Stoppard and Frayn; add, if you must, Shaffer's *Equus*, Hare's *Knuckle*, and Nichols's *Chez Nous*; and you've pretty well exhausted the commercial sector's contribution to our drama archives in the 1970s. Indeed, the traditional West End came more and more to depend on transfers of work first mounted in subsidised theatres in and out of London: a still-accelerating trend that might yet save Shaftesbury Avenue from the breakers.

Not that the subsidised theatre was without its money worries. On the contrary, mere neurosis had become outright anal obsession by the decade's close. An arts minister who believed in patching cracked dams with Dr Scholl sticky pads had been replaced by one who pranced across the concrete with pickaxe and dynamite; and those theatres who protested were quaintly advised to seek support from industry and commerce, whose interest in drama had long juddered around the zero-marker. One has only to flip through the regional listings to see the damage already inflicted. What's *Godspell* doing at Derby rep, or *Dial M for Murder* at Northampton, or *How the Other Half Loves* at Coventry? More and more, theatres are being obliged to present plays that Arts Council grants were never created to promote, and are relegating what might have been acceptable main-house fare into their 'experimental' studios. They are, in effect, being pushed into the position of proving they are not worth public subsidy. And some will no doubt close, either temporarily or permanently.

Their difficulties may at first seem surprising, because the decade has seen a considerable increase in the Arts Council's drama budget. In 1968-9 it was £1.5 millions, plus £563,000 for the National Theatre, then at the Old Vic, and the RSC; in 1978-9 it was £7.4 millions, plus £5.2 millions. But inflation has hit the theatre much more than averagely hard, and, in any case, the council's regular clients increased over the period from 63 to 99. Besides, spanking new playhouses opened at Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester and elsewhere. More and more, the Arts Council has found itself paying companies to maintain expensive buildings; and nowhere more so, of course, than in the case of the new National, whose looming portals clanked open in 1976.

It was highly ironic. Two centuries of hope, lobbying and hard work were fulfilled at the very moment, so it seemed, many of us had decided we did not need a National Theatre at all. The optimism of the 1960s had come to seem increasingly shallow, its faith in concrete increasingly naïve. Everywhere it was being demonstrated that effective theatre was at least as likely to flourish in attics, basements, church halls, warehouses, or even streets, as in lofty buildings with sleek auditoria, a thousand offices, and automated everything. How much better, some said, a travelling National company or series of companies than a vast cultural Oz; but it was too late. Gormanghast Castle, Nightmare Abbey or (as others called it) Peter Hall proceeded to worry everyone, from the critics who found standards distinctly uneven, to the profession itself. Perhaps the underground carpark was not, as one 'fringe' director assured me it was, really a vast dungeon for political offenders arrested in the coming revolution; but certainly there was a danger that it would suck money and talent from the rest of the British theatre and give too little in return.

It remained obvious that, come the crunch, the government would favour its South Bank status-symbol over the Wakefield Tricycles, Joint Stocks, Red Ladders, and all those other eclectic and often adventurous companies who formed that uncategorisable complex called the 'fringe', so painstakingly built up over the 1970s. It was, and is, possible that the British theatre might lose the feet which, for all their failings, had carried it successfully forward, yet keep its comfy slippers. Already, a similar if lesser disaster is being caused by the Arts Council's overriding obligation to companies with buildings. It is unable to support more than a few new projects, and seems unlikely to accept any new clients on to its regular payroll; yet without some such infusion the British theatre must gradually ossify. As we enter the Eighties, no one problem looks more pressing than this.

Nevertheless, the years of anxiety and constraint have brought paradoxical gains. Designers have been forced to make more and better use of the only commodity unaffected by inflation, namely space. Stages have become less cluttered, productions sparer. In many cases, the actors have become the set, to the benefit both of their own physical artistry and of fluid, lucid narrative. Directors have become more resourceful, as they've struggled to make much from little, and spectators readier to suspend disbelief and use their imaginations. How much more difficult in 1969 than in 1979 to have enjoyed Frances de la Tour's Hamlet at the shabby Half Moon, elbowing her way from skimpily-furbished podium to podium through a perambulating audience.

One of the decade's more important achievements has been the discovery and exploitation of small spaces, notably by the RSC, easily the most adventurous and accomplished of the 'establishment' companies. The Nunn/McKellen *Macbeth* was the best I've seen, and the Goodbody/Kingsley *Hamlet* scarcely less memorable. Another major happening, I suspect, has been the peaking of the power of the director over the text.

At the beginning of the decade it was rare to see a major classic that hadn't somehow been slanted to reflect the biases of one who had become, in effect, its second author. Shakespeare, the prime victim, turned out to have been writing about anti-semitism in 19th-century Trieste in the *Merchant*, fascist Germany in *Hamlet*, the brittle English 1920s in *Twelfth Night*, sexual puritanism in the Cromwellian era in the *Shrew*, the Fatal Impact of colonialism in *The Tempest*. But directors seem increasingly to have recognised of late that the plays more often emerge shrunk than illuminated from such manhandling, though it has to be admitted that their correctives have rarely proved very exhilarating. Perhaps this aspect of the decade may be summed up by the contrast between Brook's *Dream*, staged in 1970, and his *Antony*, in 1978: the one, an extravagant display of acrobatics which deprived the play of all bite and much sense; the other, plain, austere, and just a mite dull.

Another major event was the theatre's adjustment to its liberation from the Lord Chamberlain, who had doddered off to the knackers in 1968. *Oh Calcutta* raised little more than the odd eyebrow, and ended the decade playing to charabancs hired by WIs. London did not, as some had prophesied, become a gigantic porn parlour. On the contrary, the theatre dealt maturely with its belated coming-of-age, and much was saved that would otherwise have been lost to gentlemanly taboos against sex or violence. Brenton's *Christie in Love*, Taylor's *Black and White Minstrels*, Whitehead's *Foresome*, Hopkins's *Find Your Way Home*, Rudkin's *Ashes*, Griffiths's *Comedians* and Bond's *Lear* would all have been mutilated, even banned.

A list of the decade's playwriting achievements would also include Bond's *Sea*, *Bingo* and *Fool*, Pinter's *Old Times* and *Betrayal*, Stoppard's *Jumpers* and *Travesties*, Storey's *Changing Room*, Mercer's *After Haggerty*, Arden's *Island of the Mighty*, Ayckbourn's *Absurd Person Singular*, Hare's *Teeth 'n' Smiles*, Hare and Brenton's *Brassneck*. As this suggests, most of our better living dramatists

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were established before the decade started; but there were some hopeful arrivals – among them, Keeffe, Stott, Poliakoff, Barker, Edgar and Mustapha Matura, our finest black playwright – and, from old and new alike, considerable broadening of subject-matter. The claim Kenneth Tynan made at the beginning of the decade, that the theatre neglected both sexual relationships and political/social issues, would be impossible to sustain at its end.

Trenchancy and theatrical exitement were not, however, often reconciled by our expanding drama. Sometimes one felt benumbed with worthy boredom, notably at that social research unit which continues to call itself the Royal Court; sometimes, sensationally button-holed and browbeaten, notably by the gruesome promises of impending disaster offered by the talented and interesting Hare-Brenton group. The 7:84 Company and others took their wares into factories and working men's clubs in a still-continuing effort to extend their influence; but, in general, there was much intellectually and imaginatively derelict preaching to the already-convinced. John Arden, whose own work took a well-meant but disconcerting turn towards the plonkingly didactic, was able to claim in these pages that the wrong people were presenting the wrong plays to the wrong audiences in the wrong theatres.

I often found myself complaining that our playwrights weren't giving our players the opportunities their abundant and variegated talents merited. Hordern in *Jumpers*, Nelligan in Hare's *Plenty*, McKellen in *Bent*, Ralph Richardson and Gielgud in Pinter's *No Man's Land*, Pryce in *Comedians* all made a dent in that thesis, but failed to demolish it. Perhaps it is always true that the great peformances are to be found in the familiar classics; yet in the 1970s this seemed even more relentlessly the case than usual. It was the decade of Olivier's Shylock, Williamson's Coriolanus, Alan Howard's Henry V, Scofield's Captain of Koepenick, McCowen's Alceste, Rigg's Celimene, Ian Richardson's Berowne, Suzman's Masha, Whitelaw's Winnie, and Maggie Smith in an altogether sublime *Beaux' Stratagem*. Yet one emergent actor seemed to encapsulate the tone and mood of the times to a degree unmatched by any single writer: John Wood, a revolutionary Brutus, and hardly less striking in *Travesties* and Joyce's *Exiles*. In his self-aware, self-doubting, self-mocking voice, part goose's honk, part circular saw, the disillusionment and scepticism of a troubled decade found its most withering expression.

And what will we be saying at the end of the perilous Eighties, assuming we're still here and there's a theatre to write about? Hope says one thing, expectation another; but since it's the season to be silly, let hope be my oracle. Our writers will have reflected, analysed and influenced the world with more wisdom and less alarmist insularity; they will have reconciled responsibility with fun, ideas with spectacle, depth with bravura; there will have been a revival of the satiric art, lately decayed; there'll have been more intelligent plays by and about women; Arden and Wesker will have rediscovered their one-time excellence, Osborne recovered his wits, and Bond come down from the pulpit he has recently ascended; there'll have been some good new musicals, and one or two of them will have been British; our actors will have assimilated Brecht as well as Stanislavsky; we'll have seen Olivier's Lear, Pryce's Coriolanus, Rigg's Cleopatra, and several of today's 18-year-olds triumph in plays by today's 20-year-olds; a Labour government will have cancelled all debts and deficits, and given companies, especially touring companies, enough to flourish and not enough to become complacent; the Arts Council's Theatre Investment Fund will have revitalised the West End; a British Theatre Centre will have opened; the World Theatre Season will have restarted, and much more contemporary foreign drama have been seen; the RSC will not have moved into the Barbican, and the National, having been painlessly swept away by the Thames, have been radically rethought; the critics will have deserved and won new respect; I shall have been awarded the Nobel prize; and elephants will have learned to fly.

Nigel Lewis

The Arts Worldwide

IN THE WAKE of summer's big Paris-Moscow exhibition at the Pompidou Centre, Russian unofficial art has set up shop in Paris, with a magazine and an art gallery all its own. The magazine is called *A to Z*, and it will appear in a parallel English and Russian text twice yearly. The gallery – the first of its kind in the world – is called the Moscou-Petersbourg, in an echo of the Pompidou Centre's show.

The new gallery's emergence so soon after that show is no accident. The paintings, posters, and sculptures at the Pompidou – the largest consignment of Russian art ever to leave the USSR – were universally hailed as a great exhibition. It was the presentation of them that brought the criticism, from French and foreign art critics and Russian exiles alike. They complained that the catalogue was in effect a cosmetic re-writing of Russian art history this century; they pointed out the half-truths and convenient omissions; they noted that many, if not most of the works, when in the Soviet Union, were kept in storerooms where the public could not see them. They suggested that French diplomatic *politesse* was conniving at the concealment of the terrible truth behind the art on show. One left-bank gallery, the Katia Granoff, held a smaller, similar show in protest. There were demonstrations outside the Pompidou.

Active in the demonstrations was Alexander Gleser, whose name has been virtually synonymous with Russian unofficial art – art which does not adhere to the strict Soviet socialist realist line – since 1974, when an open-air show he had organized in Moscow was broken up by bulldozers. That much-publicized incident led, in 1976, to a subtle relaxation in Soviet policy towards unofficial art. But the policy was still one of containment, rather than the unfettered expression sought by Gleser and the artists. The Pompidou show, however, sharpened people's awareness of the underground survival of non-state art in the Soviet Union, and Gleser was able to find five patrons – a Brazilian, three Frenchmen, and a German – to back him. He wants his new gallery to be 'a centre of counter-propaganda, a forum, a morale-booster, and a money-making business'.

It opened in October, and within the month sold 25 paintings, more than half by artists still in the Soviet Union. Gleser has the canvases smuggled out, but declines to say how. He told me of some of these artists he thinks worth watching: 'Boris Svyeshnikov, he lives in Moscow – a Symbolist, an Expressionist. Then there's Vyacheslav Kalinin, a little bit of a naïve, a very fine painter. And Vladimir Yankilevsky, a Conceptual artist.'

Currently, the Moscou-Petersbourg is holding a show called 'The World Through Russian Eyes', to be replaced in February by Russian graphics and water-colours. One day, Gleser wants to show the work of the young painter, Ivan Pavlovski, who defected from the Soviet artists' delegation to Paris this summer: because, he said, 'I am sick to death of painting soldiers playing volleyball'.

* * *

THEY DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY in the Netherlands, where the government has just announced another improvement in its unique and controversial state support scheme for artists – BKR, or as it is better known to the Dutch, Contraprestatie. Russian artists may be at the receiving end of an iron fist; in the Netherlands it is a huge, open hand wearing a velvet glove that the state extends towards them. But too much velvet can be as detrimental to good art as too much iron.

The scheme was started in 1949. Under it, artists who have been signed up by the state sell their works to the city governments, who then apply to the Ministry of Social Affairs for their money back. In 30 years, the state has bought some 165,000 works in this way, making it the biggest patron of modern Dutch art. This year alone, it has spent 65,000,000 guilders – more than £16,000,000 – on buying paintings and sculptures from the artists – nearly 3,000 of them – currently on its books. The works are used to adorn the otherwise dull and functional walls of hospitals, schools, and other state buildings.

The trouble is, the scheme doesn't work. The man in charge of Contraprestatie, Everd van Straaten, admits that some 65,000 of these state-owned works have never been shown – not even once – and that the bulk of them are kept in poor conditions in a cold and leaky warehouse. Partly, he says, the problem is that 'quite a lot of the art is awful'; partly, it is a problem of paperwork.

From the outset, the Dutch Ministry of Culture was embarrassed by Contraprestatie, and refused to be wholly responsible for it. The works of art, it said, were simply not of a high enough standard, and it did not want to incorporate them in its official programme of exhibitions, loans, and acquisitions. But it did agree to administer the scheme, on condition that the Ministry of Social Affairs paid for it. A lot of the administrative paperwork has disappeared in the gulf between the two departments, and this has helped to swell the backlog of neglected works.

Recently, Dutch artists demonstrated in the

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streets of Amsterdam to air their grievances against Contraprestatie. They weren't complaining about low pay; on the contrary, they're in clover as never before. What they *were* complaining about was that the state wasn't treating them as – well – as artists. The involvement of the Social Affairs Ministry was a double insult to their status, implying that artists comprised a potentially anti-social element that had to be kept happy, and at the same time reducing art to the level of a useful social service. They demanded that they should in future be able to work in the Ministry of Culture.

This hasn't happened, but the government has moved some way towards meeting the artists' demands: it has announced that it'll be taking on fifteen more staff to speed the passage of the paperwork, and that it is negotiating for the lease of 'a huge building' in the Hague where works bought by the state can be efficiently administered and documented, and where those works of art that no one wants can be stored in the comfortable style to which Dutch artists have become accustomed.

The Barnes Awards

JULIAN BARNES reviews a year's television

Christmas is irony time for the TV critic. Night after night he spends howling and blubbing on the viewing couch, transcribing his rage and disbelief with the aid of his Sunlight Electric torch-pen, and brooding rancorously on the enviable normality of other people's social lives. Then, when asked to look back over the year, he finds it full of enriching shows and vital moments he is glad he caught. Who would have missed, for instance, among the political one-liners of 1979, David Owen expounding his theory of 'the differential abstention' (a linguistic device to make you feel better when your party has been wiped out at an election), or David Steel declaring of the Liberals 'Well, we certainly weren't decimated', when one seat in ten was a near enough estimate of their losses. Similarly cherishable was John Hurt's vaunting, unironic explanation of why he didn't read *Crime and Punishment* before playing Raskolnikov: 'It's my own pet theory . . . I never do any research at all.' And the year also threw up Russell Harty's updating of Wilfred Pickles's poser 'What was your most embarrassing moment?'; nowadays we ask (as Harty did of Jimmy Greaves), 'What was the moment of deepest degradation for you?'

The NEW STATESMAN's *Deepest Degradation Award* goes this year to Alan Bennett, for letting Lindsay Anderson do what he did to *The Old Crowd*. In more standard categories, the prizes are as follows. Best Play (by a furlong): Denis Potter's *Blue Remembered Hills*. Best Revival: *The Voysey Inheritance* (David Jones's farewell to Play of the Month). Best Actress: divided between Cheryl Campbell's Vera Brittain and Joanna David's dangerously affecting second Mrs de Winter in *Rebecca*. Best Actor: Hywell Bennett's high-stepping, tight-bummed Dr Bickleigh in *Malice Aforethought*. Best Documentary: divided between two programmes which both unearthed caches of wartime film: *Bombers* and the *Inside Story* report on the nightmarish Freisler show trials.

In the house categories the following awards are made:

Titanic Award. This premier category – given for sinking without trace on a maiden voyage – is always heavily contested. A strong late challenge arrived from Donald Sinden, posing as a front man on *Discovering English Churches*; what he was up against, though, was the effortless inferiority of *Mainstream* with its week-in, week-out presentation of 'regional arts' as trestle tables full of people sipping pints and listening to a Welsh imitation of bluegrass music.

The same show also picked up the *Marie Celeste Crystal Goblet*, awarded to the programme which produces evidence of the largest number of deckhands defecting in the course of a single season. Joan Bakewell led the list of sensible takers of an early bath.

Magnus Magnusson Toby Jug (for new TV arrivals who make one sinkingly aware that they will be around for a long time): James 'Work Camp' Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, who is wheeled on whenever a dose of brylcreme-and-soda moralising is needed to balance the liberal pundits. As the ranks of thinkdom are well filled with liberal-left spouters, I foresee a hardworking future for the flatfoot with the smell-of-gas expression. Anderton thinks of Christ as a Thatcherite – a 'reactionary revolutionary' is how he puts it – and treads a macho-Christian beat himself: 'I am tough when I have to be – and wasn't Christ tough when he had to be?' He was also victim of the year's best *sotto voce* put-down, by Enoch Powell on *Question Time*. Powell suggested that the reason people were bad was because of Original Sin; Anderton blithely took issue with this in finest Mr Plod style – 'The best thing for people is to avoid Original Sin'; Powell was heard to mutter, just above mike-level, 'They can't – they've got it.'

Golden Humbug Award: to Richard Ingrams, asked on *Platform One* whether all sex outside marriage ought to be exposed by *Private Eye*. 'There would have to be some other element in the story – of humbug, for example.'

Zatopek Trophy (for gritty endurance): to all viewers who got to the end of *Prince Regent*.

Prince Regent Tasselled Muff (for gallantry): to the naked husband who, when asked whether naturism was really about sex, cast a sidelong glance at his naked wife and responded, 'I think it's de-sexing.'

Scrooge Cup: to Gerald Campion, the actor who once played Billy Bunter, for declining to be cajoled by David Jacobs on *Where Are They Now?* into uttering his famous fat boy's cry of 'Yaroooo'. 'If you want any "Yaroooos", Mr Jacobs,' he replied, 'they're £150 each.' We didn't get any.

Micawber Scroll: Bill Maclaren, for his comment as the All Blacks scored again at Twickenham: 'And that's a blow to England – they were nicely set at just four points adrift.'

Solomon Salver (for wise advice in tight corners): Laurens van der Post, veldt-trekking with his grand-daughter on *The World About Us*, on how to deal with rhino, lions, snakes, scorpions, beetles, ants, etc.: 'If things get really bad, you must just get up the tree here.'

Brynner Trophy. Instituted last year and given for tact beyond the call of duty when commentators have to mention baldness. Last year it went to Alan Weeks for his identification of a completely shaven swimmer – 'Duncan Goodhew, *very distinctive*.' This year it goes to Bill Maclaren. During the Scotland v Wales match, as a dozen muddy but well-pelted bruisers delved and hacked for a ball, the pate of one Scottish forward shone like a light-bulb. 'Mike Biggar,' began Maclaren, '. . .er . . .easily seen.'

Coleman Cup. Given for sports-boobs, and always attracting a talented entry. This year there have been more than a few sportsmen jostling with the commentators to pull out the big one. Emlyn Hughes had a fine cuckooland comment on being 1-0 down at half time to his old club Liverpool: 'First half we matched them – apart from the score'; and Malcolm Allison did well (admittedly in a more knowing fashion) when describing one of Joe Corrigan's blunders: 'He was falling and he went to catch it and he'd got beautiful hands – and it went right through them.' David Coleman himself, always reliable, bawled dubiously down the transatlantic cable from Montreal, 'And welcome to the Big O'; but in the final analysis this didn't charm the judges as much as a comment from Bill 'Two-Cup' Maclaren during the Scotland-All Blacks match. At one point Stu Wilson had to leave the field with an enormous gash over his eye and half his face awash with blood. Maclaren: 'Happily it's not a recurrence of his groin injury.'

The top award for commercials went once again to Guinness, who came up late in the year with a couple of brilliant ads about the toucan-faced owner of a toucan. Runner-up was Smith's Crisps, for a nice aural simile comparing the sound of crisps being eaten to that of the tramp of a troop of marching sea-scouts. There are three special categories for commercials:

George Orwell Prize: awarded to TV front-men notorious for their integrity, whose voices still strike the public ear with Delphic authority, but who agree to appear in commercials. This year the prize goes to René Cutforth for parading up and down Australian supermarkets and proclaiming from out of his Audenish face the virtues of Krona margarine. According to him, the product caught on instantly, simply because of its sheer quality, and started selling out overnight. Question: if it's as infectiously sellable as Cutforth assures us, why do they need him to help flog it?

Marvin Mitchelson Award (for actors reduced by recurrent divorces to doing any television commercial offered): Orson Welles. To his long-running Carlsberg ads (plus a variety of pretty mixed stuff down the years), Awesome has now added an excruciating Domecq sherry ad. The bulky former genius, dressed in a black safari suit and looking like a dispossessed emperor, wanders around a 'Spanish' house and pronounces on the 'fruitfulness' brought forth by the local sun. In the

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to lay his sherry-glass back on its coaster and final shot the maker of *Citizen Kane* is made pronounce, 'Nature's very wonderful.'

Anna Coote Flitch of Bacon: To Barry Lategan, fashion and beauty photographer responsible for the progressive insight that the new Renault 18 has remarkable parallels with a sexually attractive woman. As his ad explains, both are sleek, shiny, curvy, powerful, a little wild, but controllable by the deft touch of a knowing male hand. This column calls on all women to boycott Renault cars until further notice.

Finally, since every column has to have a Moral, here is this year's one. On *Where Are They Now*? David Jacobs interviewed Captain Kurt Carlsen, the master of a ship which, after a 14-day agony, famously sank in 1951. In those days, when television screens were the size of a sugar lump and had to be watched through a mahogany-framed magnifying glass on legs, the Captain was a great tube hero; viewers nightly thrilled to news of the valiant mariner. But Carlsen, as the title of Jacobs's show implies, was also a pioneer victim of television's beguiling yet evanescent fame. 'After the publicity died down,' Jacobs asked him 28 years on, 'what happened next?' Carlsen pondered dourly for a few seconds and replied, 'Nothing.'

Music

Mark Todd

The Chorale of St Wenceslas

This month two Czech operas – Janácek's *The Makropoulos Affair* and Martinů's *Julietta* – were performed in London by major opera companies. This continues a tradition of English receptivity to Czech music dating back to Dvorák's visit to England in 1884. The rhythms, colour and lyrical inspiration of Czech music made it immediately successful; new works were seized on. Two of Dvorák's symphonic poems, for instance, received their very first public performances in London – under Sir Henry Wood (November 1896).

A new set of persuasive performances of the symphonic poems – by Vaclav Neumann and the Czech Philharmonic – reminds us that with their beauties of scoring, illustrative and evocative, they are as imaginative as anything he wrote. Dismemberment, death by drowning, witches' curses, sudden deaths of children – these form the incidents of the poems Dvorák (1841-1904) used when, having completed all his symphonies, concertos and chamber works, he felt drawn to the symphonic poem. The collection *The Garland* by Karel Jaromír Erben, poems in folk style based on Slavonic legends, was his source of inspiration; his letters show how closely he kept to the plots of the poems. And he set individual lines to themes later incorporated into the symphonic poems – 'Give me your child' is 'spoken' by the trumpet to the terrified mother in *The Mid-day Witch*, the description of the 'Water Goblin's' home, 'Melancholy and mournful is the watery kingdom . . .' – is narrated by clarinet and violas. There are also more conventional orchestral effects – e.g. the child's crowing toy on the oboe – but all elements are artistically unified. Unfortunately, Dvorák's final symphonic poem, *The Hero's Song* (1897) is omitted from this set in favour of a tepid rendering of the earlier *The Hussites* overture, commemorating the defeat of Bohemia by the Austrians in 1620.

It was the use of word patterns in these symphonic poems, pre-dating his own very different settings of the spoken word, which so excited Janácek (1854-1928) that he wrote a series of articles on them, and persuaded Dvorák to entrust him with the first performance of *The Wild Dove*. This took place in Brno in 1898, and now, 90 years later, the first recorded performance of Janácek's own opera *Fate* (1904) arrives from there.

Fate was composed between *Jenůfa* and *Mr Broucek's Excursions* but never received a production in Janácek's lifetime – or, indeed, for long after- perhaps because of the weak libretto and continual scene changes. On record these can be forgotten. The cast includes Vilém Pribyl and Magdaléna Hajóssyová, and the veteran Frantisek Jílek directs authoritatively and with commitment. The music is totally inspired, full of invention and the extraordinarily intense feeling peculiar to Janácek's setting of Czech speech-lines. The elements of the story – the artistic spirit confined by bourgeois convention, the tragedy lying in wait after pre-marital liaison – were of immense personal significance to Janácek, as was the spa setting of the opening; consequently the story's naive melodrama is transformed into an experience of aching intensity. Perhaps the satiric treatment of the schoolmistresses of the girls' academy recalls scenes from *Broucek*, but the passion of the long soliloquies of the composer hero, eloquently sung by Vilém Pribyl, anticipates Janácek's masterpieces, *Diary of a Young Man who Disappeared* and the String Quartets.

Dvorák, in a speech in London, hailed the renaissance of Czech life which he did not live to see politically realised:

> Twenty years ago we Slavs were nothing. Now we feel our national life once more awakening.

Janácek grew up, and composed his earlier works in the days of the Austrian supremacy, begun so long before in the battle commemorated in Dvorák's overture, and flowered in the hopes of the early Czechoslovak republic – a personal and political experience sublimated in the *Sinfonietta*, also recently recorded in Brno in an inspiring performance under Jiri Belohlávek. Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959) on the other hand, nearly 50 years younger, saw events in the reverse direction. After reaching maturity in the republic, he had to flee from Europe in the second world war and even the offer of posts in Czechoslovakia in the postwar years could not entice him to settle there again.

Martinů's symphonies are products of his middle age, of his American years during and immediately after the war. They contain hints of the war – in the finale of the second, first performed for the Czechs in Cleveland on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic (1943), the trumpets quote from the Marseillaise – 'Aux armes, citoyens!', and two of the symphonies quote a phrase from the St Wenceslas Chorale, inspiration of the Czechs in 1620 and quoted by Dvorák in his overture. This phrase held special significance for the Martinů family. Back in Czechoslovakia, his brother boldly painted the notation of the tune across the front of his house, with the accompanying words . . . 'Don't let us perish.'

Unfortunately many did perish; one reason Martinů could not face returning home after 1945 was the news of the death of his best friend; he survived to send a telegram to Martinů on the liberation, but died, broken-hearted at the death of his wife and children in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, before Martinů could meet him again. And another Martinů work commemorates the slaughter of an entire Czech village, the *Memorial to Lidice*. But it is not the tragedy of war which characterises these symphonies, but the endurance of humanity and the human spirit, in an instantly recognisable style, contrasting motor rhythms with lyrical passages of luminous, ethereal orchestration and with insistent syncopations and organic use of colour contributing to their overall unity. Martinů said of his Sixth Symphony,

> Something holds it together; I don't know what, but it has a single line and I have expressed something in it. The future will show.

The new set (quadrophonic) of excellent performances is not by the crack American orchestras which gave most of the premières, but again by the Czech Philharmonic under Neumann. It too has had its political setbacks – scheduled 20 years ago, its progress was halted in 1968 when both conductors originally involved, Karel Ancerl and Martín Turnovsky, left the country. But let us hope that the orchestras of Cleveland and Boston which first brought these captivating works to life wipl soon be inspired by this Prague set to continue the tradition, especially as there is something of the American as well as the Czech character in their confidence, health and sense of open space.

Records Discussed

DVORÁK: **Erben Symphonic Poems** – 'The Water Goblin', 'The Mid-day Witch', 'The Golden Spinning Wheel', 'The Wild Dove'. **Hussites Overture** (Czech Philharmonic Orchestra/Václav Neumann) *Supraphon SUP 2591/2.*

JANÁCEK: **Fate** (Soloists, Brno State Theatre Orchestra/Frantisek Jílek) *Supraphon 2011/2*
Sinfonietta and Taras Bulba (Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra/Jiri Belohlávek) *Panton 11 0728.*

MARTINŮ: **Inventions, Symphony No 1** *Supraphon 2166*
Symphonies No 2 and 6 *Supraphon 2096*
Symphonies 3, 4 and 5 *Supraphon 2771/2*
All: Czech Philharmonic Orchestra/ Václav Neumann.

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Films

John Coleman

Masked Balls

La Luna (X) *Odeon, Haymarket*
L'Age d'Or *and* **Magritte** *ICA*
Bear Island (A) *Leicester Square Theatre*
Caravans (A) *Classic, Haymarket*

That the plural of opus is opera is something the greatly talented Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci would do well to forget. With his *Spider's Stratagem* and *The Conformist,* he made two home-grown near-masterpieces. His *Last Tango in Paris* found him floundering in foreign parts, one of which was Brando's. All right, I now hear you cry, what about *1900,* which found him very much at home? That was the long labour of love, the very very long down-there-on-a-visit to native, natal provincial Emilia, a rural Parman place resoundingly embraced by Vittorio Storaro's camera. It bored for nostalgia. And Bertolucci still has it in mind. He wickedly gives it a look-in in his latest show.

La Luna is a sort of triumph for self-indulgence an ego-maniac's trip, a melodramatic mess. All the bits of geography, biography, hagiography, homeopathy and downright apathy that have hetherto brilliantly figured in the best of Bertolucci here come together in a Hollywoodian tale. Plus naughties, risible ones.

There is the excellent and riotously miscast Jill Clayburgh as Catenina, a diva out of Manhattan. She has a son, Joe (Matthew Barry), whom she has somewhat neglected. Predictably, he reacts by mainlining. When his apparent father dies of a heart-attack (he read the script?), young Joe gets to go to Rome, where mum is to sing in such golden oldies as *Il Trovatore* and *Un Ballo in Maschera.*

Talking of masked balls, as we are, there is a deal of incestuous matter to enliven the occasion. Caterina, *toujours gaie,* copes with one of her son's failed needlings by the simple maternal trick of rubbing what rests beneath his jeans. The couple also neck strenuously in a car. It may be they go further. Not all is as clear as it might be in this extravaganza. That titular moon, for instance, which has something to do with honey in the opening sequence and hence lends itself to equivocal puns in at least two languages. How much Bertolucci was aware of this remains in doubt, which is where his film rests too. It has stunning images – like the ultimate soppiness at the ruined Baths of Caracalla, where mum rediscovers her voice, the real pa (himself in thrall to a mum, and – given that she is Alida Valli – who wouldn't be?) smiles wanly at Joe, and everything turns out nice. There is another, strange little splendour engaging a drug-pushing, worldly-wise kid, Mustafa, who entertains Caterina with bemusing courtesy. There are, in fact, several remarkable moments: a lunch-time in a roadside caff; a delicate dinner prepared by Joe for mum, candles and all; the tosh is high-class. But tosh it is.

And, one would think, planned as such. Such politico-autobiographical aberrations as Renato Salvatori's picking up milady on the road, flashing a photo of Castro and declaring. 'I am a Communist'; or the higher ludicrousness of the beach-and-honey Freud-food of the beginning – these are the indices of, the indiscretions of, someone out to make a best-seller. The deep trouble for a vastly gifted film-maker like Bertolucci is that he cannot make a *Love Story,* or *Deep Throat,* or whatever. He is simply too good and this is simply too bad.

Once upon a time, when the medium was relatively new, a knife sliced an eyeball on screen, or so it seemed. This gave rise to protests. *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) was the name by which this dog went. Two years later, Buñuel did his own thing:

> Dali had nothing to do with the filming; and I put his name alongside mine on the titles out of friendship. Dali and I were separated through the fault of his wife.

L'Age d'Or, extremely rarely screened, is the surrealist affair under discussion, some acrimony, and review. The ICA is to be congratulated for giving us a chance to say what a load of cobblers it is and, at the same time, to cast a brief, cross-eyed glance at the business of surrealism, anyway. The film belongs to history, not large art.

Surrealism, in a nutshell (which is probably where it has its habitat), is there to burst out, outrage, unsettle. At best, it slings bishops, giraffes, and such assorted weirdos out of the window. *L'Age d'Or* contrives these minor feats on camera, setting off with a small solemnity about scorpions and ending up with a look-alike for Jesus Christ and a trio of unmerry men leaving an orgy-castle out of de Sade. This is surrealism at its worst, cheaply blasphemous and boring to boot. If the trick is toying with amorality, or concussion of the conscience, Buñuel was to go on to much, much craftier legerdemains. The toe-suck, immortalised in a hundred film-books, is just a lady sucking a statue's toe. I suppose such an event was capable of causing a frisson at the time; it made history. But, my god, how dull frisson-causing history can be a few years on. Oddly, in the same bill, David Wheatley's *Magritte* becomes a masterpiece in contrast. This is a very clever series of reconstructions, doing at least two of the hardest things: finding an actor who can swan through an impossible impersonation and displaying the geneses of some of those mind-bending canvases, clouds on easels against clouds. Real toads in imaginary gardens, and how.

Elsewhere, there is Don Sharp doing his thoroughly professional best by an Alistair MacLean thriller set in polar wastes. This is the manner of films where a scanning of the poster (Donald Sutherland, Christopher Lee, Richard Widmark, Vanessa Redgrave) provides assurance that a good performance will be given by all. And there is a lot of immensely convincing snow, and many a hectic chase through and across it, and I guessed the baddies too early to garner maximum fun from it; but I'm sickening and swanky that way. The venus is known as *Bear Island.* A tedious trail, again drawn from a fat novel (by James Michener, and an insomniac night was minimally alleviated by it: it reads much better than it screens), is currently a-winding – *Caravans.* Anthony Quinn plays a life-enhancing Arab. James Fargo directed, son (surely) of Wells.

Rock

Mark Kidel

Slow Burning

Talking Heads *The Electric Ballroom, Camden Town*

Talking Heads hit the mind and body simultaneously. Sophisticated alumni of a Rhode Island art college, their music is framed in many layers of media past and present, a delicate and often original mirror of the multiple crossed wires that make up the mainstream and counter-cultures of our time. The lyrics of 'I Zimbra', one of the best tracks from their remarkable latest album *Fear of Music*, are a sound poem by Hugo Ball, one of the early Dadaists – a reflection perhaps of the line of heredity which connects the avant-garde of today's rock with another rebellion over 60 years ago.

'I Zimbra' is also a track which lives by its intricate cross-rhythms: it is an irresistibly danceable number, and it is the combination of 'art' and a solid dance beat – in Talking Heads's case a deep depth to the soul beat of the mid-Sixties – which makes them unique. The combination is not unlikely, given the history of rock'n'roll in the last 25 years, its continuous connections with less polished but usually more vigorous black music, and the absorption in the Sixties of the more literate and political concerns of folk, and through them the transcendental explorations of the beatniks.

Talking Heads stipulated on this UK tour that they should play in dance-halls, not the usual and sedate venues like the Rainbow or Manchester's Free Trade Hall. They wanted their audience to bop, not just to listen with reverence to David Byrne's tortured and oblique lyrics. But their appeal is such that bopping in Camden Town's Electric Ballroom was out of the question.

In superstar style, the band had us all waiting a long time – the lateness a tiny indication perhaps that they were no longer trying quite so hard as in their struggling days, more confident now of their ability to win London recognition. It was not until 'Animals' – about four songs into the set – that things really got hot, the climaxes up to that point a little mechanical and over-rehearsed. Talking Heads's music has a slow-burning quality, building up a sense of excitement throughout each number, from moody, sometimes quiet beginnings to the final explosion at the end. It

Among this week's contributors:

CHRISTOPHER HITCHEN's report *Inequalities in Zimbabwe* has just been published by the Minority Rights Group.

John Gielgud was RONALD HAYMAN's first biography. His critical biography of Nietzsche is coming out in the spring and he is now working on a book on Kafka.

MARK TODD is the secretary of the Dvorak Society for Czech Music.

MARK KIDEL works for Dartington Hall Trust.

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is a drama built on repetition and tension, a relentless beat quite different from the operatic style of so much rock: the Heads's approach is almost minimal, stripped of frills and inessentials. As there are no decorations to fall back on, there needs to be that special magic which, as most rock musicians are ready to admit, only manifests occasionally; otherwise, as happened most of the night at the Electric Ballroom, the hypnotic pattern can become simply monotonous.

In this particular instance, group chemistry played its part only intermittently, a tantalising indication of how things might have been, in a less crowded environment with more space for people to move and respond more openly to the band. David Byrne, who has developed hysteria into an art, screeched and writhed like a candidate for lobotomy, his gaunt good looks a constant reminder of another persona – the poet and sensitive, a man whose nerve-ends are just that little bit more acutely attuned. Tina Weymouth, so delicate for a bass player – and a curiosity for all those male chauvinists (men and women) who do not believe that a lady can make hard, rhythmic music – played the innocent child at the side of the maniac: watching wide-eyed his every move, and pumping away at her bass guitar as if to spur him further on into madness. She is, on the surface, an unlikely partner for David Byrne, much less anonymous than Jerry Harrison (keyboards) or Chris Frantz (drums), and so *normal* next to Byrne's ravings. On a musical level, however, she fits in beautifully, or to be more exact, she provides the heart of the band's rhythm, the pulse which keeps the lead vocalist's antics from sounding purely self-indulgent.

It is this bizarre combination which enables Talking Heads to express violence and aggression without becoming self-conscious like so many others who flirt with the dark side of our emotional world. They transform negative energies through the ritual of dance, the undulating beat so central to their sound. At the Electric Ballroom, the exorcism took off in parts. The audience stood waiting for something amazing to happen – but it never did.

Weekend Competition

No 2598 **Set by P. W. R. Foot**

A chance for one last (nostalgic?) look back over that decidedly artificial unit, the decade. 16 lines of verse, please, beginning 'It wasn't so bad in the Seventies. . .' by 18 January.

No 2595 **Set by C. Vita-Finzi**

We asked for single-line summaries of occupations as succinct as 'those who can, do; those who can't, teach'.

Report **By Len the Unlucky**

I cut short the festivities, struggle back across the country and what do I find? A dreary, deserted office and a note stuck to my typewriter with a blob of Fat Jeff's chewing gum saying 'It's all yours, Len'. Not the thing to put one in a receptive frame of mind I can tell you. And then the sorters all come barging in, complaining in a most disrespectful way , that they're wasting their time because the post office is on strike and there is nothing to sort. By the time I've dealt with them I'm in even less of a jovially generous comp-judging mood than I was before. Ploughing glumly through the thinnish folder of entries that actually made it through the Christmas post I begin to cheer up a tiny bit. But only a tiny bit, mind you. At least, I now feel, I'm not a lawyer or an accountant, a doctor or an architect, and it's against them that the main stream of your venom (if not the best of your wit) is directed. Not that you care for journalists all that much either – and as for critics. . . Unfortunately, there was a certain sameness about the 'if you can, write; if you can't, criticise' formulations. Tim Hopkins's variant sneaks into the winning list by being the neatest of them all.

Brooding alone in a rapidly darkening Complex I turn frequently to T. A. Dyer's entry about our present occupation. 'A literary competition is a rare case of casting imitation pearls before genuine swine.' It seems all too apt. A quid for him and one for each of the entries listed below. And if you didn't win and think you should have, don't blame me. I'm only doing my job, which is more than can be said for some people.

Those who can't, but know people who can, host chat shows.
Those who can't, and hate those who can, join the Inland Revenue.
Those who can, but don't want to, sell home-made pottery.
PETER RUMNEY

Labour peers: red squares in blue circles.
Comedians: those who believe it is better to be obscene than not heard.
P. W. R. FOOT

If you can, defect; if you can't, become Keeper of Her Majesty's Pictures.
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

He who can writes English verse;
He who can't writes Martian.
ROBERT BAIRD

Lawyers: members of the oldest profession allowed to solicit.
T. GRIFFITHS

Behaviourists re-condition; Freudians analyse; Clare Rayner guesses.
Those who can, scribble; those who can't, quibble.
TIM HOPKINS

Town planner: a person who plans to live in the country.
MAY DAY

Anyone can be a Royal if they have the right parents. Those who can't become Labour MPs, write for the NEW STATESMAN.
E. O. PARROTT

Town planners are blighters.
You need a natural bent to succeed in the police force.
BOB SCOTT

A pawnbroker is a man with three balls.
A chemist dispenses with training.
JOHN BENNETT

Politicians: if you can, deliver; if you can't, promise.
Doctors: if you can, cure; if you can't, confuse.
Journalists: if you can, expose; if you can't, smear.
PETER PETERSON

If you can-can, do; if you can't-can't, strip.
If you can sell yourself, be a salesman; if you can sell your grandmother, be a PRO.
W. J. WEBSTER

If you can, solve; if you can't, compile.
ROWAN MITCHELL

Tony Miles

Chess

No 161 **Rivalry in Buenos Aires**

The second Clarin tournament in Buenos Aires, sponsored by the largest Argentinian newspaper, was a remarkable event. On paper, with two ex-world champions and another nine top class grandmasters, a fierce struggle seemed likely for first place. In fact things turned out rather differently.

After the sixth round I was the nominal leader with four points, but the Dane Larsen had 3½ with two adjournments. In both he stood a little better, but in both the win seemed unlikely. In the first Petrosian made an astonishing blunder immediately after the resumption and lost, and in the second Larsen produced some fine endgame play to take the point from Quinteros. Suddenly he had a lead of 1½ points.

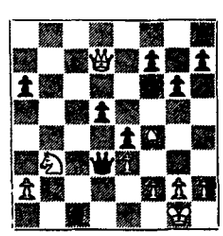
The crucial game came in the seventh round, Larsen having the black pieces against Spassky. Anything other than a win for Spassky would virtually settle the tournament. Larsen played his pet variation of the Caro-Kann and Spassky enterprisingly sacrificed the exchange. Both sides ignored defence and the attacks crashed through simultaneously. With his king otherwise defenceless Larsen produced a string of checks, finally forcing the exchange of queens and thus an endgame still with his extra material. The fireworks, though, had eliminated all but one of the Dane's pawns, but it just proved sufficient and Spassky resigned when faced with further material loss.

From that point Larsen never looked back. The lead widened to a remarkable 3 points by the end, and he was safe with two rounds still to play, finishing with 11/13.

I held second place virtually throughout the tournament, until I got a little bit too generous with my rooks and suffered a late loss to Quinteros. Consequently I had to settle for a four-way tie with Spassky, Anderson (Sweden) and Najdorf (Argentina) on 8 pts. Next came Ivkov (Yugoslavia) and Gheorghiu (Rumania) 7½, Quinteros 6½, Panno (Argentina) and Petrosian (an astonishing failure) 6, Lombardy (USA) and Franco (Paraguay) 5, Tempone (Argentina) 3 and Rubinetti (Argentina) 1½.

White: B. Spassky **Black: B. Larsen**
1.P-K4, P-QB3; 2.P-Q4, P-Q4; 3.N-QB3, PxP; 4.NxP, N-B3; 5.NxNch, NPxN; 6.B-K2, B-B4; 7.N-B3, Q-B2; 8.0-0, P-K3; 9.P-B4, N-Q2; 10.P-Q5, 0-0-0; 11.B-K3, P-QB4; 12.P-QN4, R-N1; 13.NPxP, BxP; 14.N-Q4, B-KR6; 15.P-N3, BxR; 16.BxB, N-K4; 17.R-N1, N-N5; 18.B-B1, P-KR4; 19.R-N3, P-R5; 20.B-QR3, RPxP; 21.RPxP, P-B4; 22.BxB, QxB; 23.R-N5, Q-Q3; 24.Q-N3, P-B5; 25.RxP, PxNP; 26.RxRP, PxPch; 27.K-N2, Q-R7ch; 28.K-B3, Q-R8ch; 29.K-N3, N-B3ch; 30.KxP, Q-R5ch; 31.K-K2, Q-K5ch; 32.Q-K3, QxQch; 33.KxQ, R-N6ch; 34.K-Q2, PxP; 35.N-B5, K-N1; 36.RxP, PxPch; 37.K-B2, R-B6; 38.N-N3, R-B7ch; 39.B-K2, R-N1 Resigns.

Problem 161



White to play continued 1.Q-B6ch, K-N2; 2.B-K5ch, K-R3; 3.QxB, R-QB1! when black had counterplay and eventually managed to draw. Did white miss anything? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 16 January.

Solution to problem 158

1.K-N5, P-N4; 2.K-B4! K-Q7!; 3.K-Q4! K-K7! 4.K-K4! K-B7! 5.K-B5! K-B6! 6.P-R5! and white queens with check and wins.

Solution to problem 159

1.K-N5! K-R6 (else R-R3ch wins) 2.R-R2ch! KxR; 3.KxR, P-N6; 4.P-B7, P-N7; 5.P-B8=Q, P-N8=Q; 6.Q-R3 mate.

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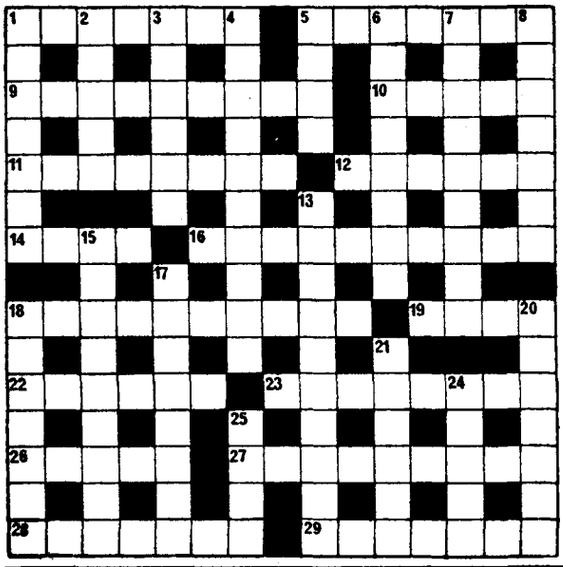
Weekend Crossword 1328

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1328, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 15 January.



ACROSS

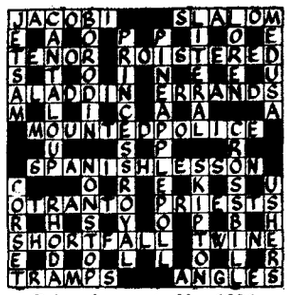
1 Where there is little work at the factory (7).
5 Victory coming late for boy in play (7).
9 Beautiful youth conceals the scars in us (9).
10 Novelist as informer (5).
11 Wrongly call a king when there is no danger (3, 5).
12 A means of commemorating the conservative in the body politic (6).
14 Let out when the sentence is reversed (4).
16 Union price allowance includes obsolete currency (10).
18 The consequences of numeracy? (10).
19 Plant in another bed (4).
22 These birds often go after a ring (6).
23 Gold performed without a girl, being a candidate for the ministry (8).
26 Butterfly for example (5).
27 Producing life as a result of an Islington marriage? (9).
28 Oiled as in strong desire (7).
29 'Leave and make merry' the town says (7).

DOWN

1 Town which puts need above seniority (7).
2 'Retirement, ——— quiet, friendship, books' (Thomson) (5).
3 Wastes slips of paper (6).
4 Wrongly pay wages as means of getting through (10).
5 A stinger even if beheaded (4).
6 Garment which needs patching (8).
7 However foolish? (9).
8 Without us the film would be grim (7).
13 Diversion for woman in socialist circle (3, 7).
15 Mostly bury on condition there is no will (9).
17 Bad women whose heads are about to turn (8).
18 The trouble with boxing is that it is full of love (7).
20 Adorned like the man in the bay (7).
21 Fails badly with one point in examination (6).
24 Foreign friend makes another leave (5).
25 Literary man who is the reverse of dull (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No. 1326



Prizewinners to No. 1326

Mrs B. D. Lloyd (NW11)
H. G. A. Peters (Darwen)
Rebecca Fox (Redhill)

APPOINTMENTS

INTO WORK — Action-Research for young unemployed

This unique project, founded nationally on a yearly basis by the Manpower Services Commission to report on the views and aspirations of young people with employment problems, needs two senior members of staff. The project, co-ordinated through a central unit, is based in **East Cornwall, South London and North Tyneside.**

Research Director

(East Cornwall) £5,220 p.a.

Will be responsible for the research programme for the team of nine. Must be able to develop research initiatives, monitor field work and write up research findings.

Interviews to be held in Bodmin, **Wednesday 30 January.**

Training and Development Officer

(Central Unit, London) £6,447 p.a.

Responsible for co-ordinating training needs of 27 staff in the three areas. Good grounding in research methodology desirable, ability to communicate ideas.

Interviews in London — **Thursday 31 January.** Both appointments are until **31 July 1980.** Closing date: Wednesday **23 January.**
Further details and application forms: **Eve Oldham, INTO WORK, 57 Chalton Street, London NW1 1HU. 01-388 4763.**

LOW PAY UNIT

requires a

Research Officer

Applications are invited for a Research Officer at the Low Pay Unit, an independent research and campaigning body whose purpose is to influence the policy of Government, trade unions and employers as these affect the low paid.

Candidates should have a good degree (preferably, though not essentially, in economics, industrial relations, sociology or social policy) and should have an interest in economic and social policy. An ability to write clearly and to meet deadlines is essential, as is the ability to present statistical material in an easily understandable way.

Salary will be at an appropriate point on the AUT Research Scale 1B.

Written applications, including a curriculum vitae, should be sent to **Jill Sullivan, Secretary, Low Pay Unit, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG,** from whom further details can be obtained.

NT NATIONAL THEATRE

has a vacancy for a

Rights Manager

The work involves the negotiation of licenses of stage and subsidiary rights in literary and dramatic material used by the Theatre and in other media, and of collective agreements with writers' unions.

The successful candidate must have knowledge of current practice in the fields of contracts, copyright and defamation and be capable of advising the Theatre's management on the law concerning them.

Salary negotiable. Four weeks' holiday. Subsidised canteen.

Please write or telephone for an application form to:

David Roberts, Head of Establishments, National Theatre, South Bank, London SE1 9PX. Tel: 01-928 2033 ext. 376.

THE BANK OF ENGLAND STAFF ORGANISATION

Assistant General Secretary

A Certificated Trade Union requires an Assistant General Secretary to work in the City. Previous experience in Trade Union employment or relevant academic qualifications are essential. Salary not less than £7,000, good holidays and Conditions of Service.

The successful applicant will be required to take up the post as soon as possible.

Applications giving full details of age, qualifications and previous experience should be addressed to: **The President, Bank of England Staff Organisation, 49 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4SA by 16 January 1980.**

PART-TIME Shorthand Typist required for small University Research Institute. Hours by arrangement, some work could be done at home. Apply Margaret Beard, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 27 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DS. 01-580 5876.

SECRETARY required for research project concerned with politics and the media. Temporary 1-year appointment. Please write to The Hansard Society, 16 Gower St, WC1, or phone 323 1131 or 580 1076.

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STATISTICIAN

The Commission, which was set up by statute to work towards the elimination of sex discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity between the sexes, has a vacancy at its Manchester Headquarters for a qualified and experienced statistician.

The task is to set up and operate a small but high calibre statistical unit, to assist the Commission in their law enforcement responsibilities, and in the development of policies for the promotion of equal opportunity.

The post is challenging and provides an exciting opportunity for someone with expertise in the collection and analysis of complex data in the fields of economic or social research. The ability to present such data to non-specialists indicates the requirement for considerable skill in oral and written communication.

Applications are invited from men and women who have either a second class Honours degree (or above) in Statistics, or a first degree in Mathematics or Economics with a post-graduate degree in Statistics.

The commencing salary will be £8,850 per annum, on a scale rising by annual increments to £11,750. Five weeks holiday. Non-contributory pension scheme.

Application forms and further details of the post are available from **Judy Connolly, Personnel Section, Equal Opportunities Commission, Overseas House, Quay Street, Manchester M3 3HN. Telephone number 061-833 9244 extension 78.**

Equal Opportunities Commission

SALFORD AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY (TEACHING)

PRESTWICH HOSPITAL— VOLUNTARY SERVICES OFFICER

Salary: £4,240-£5,537 p.a. (with further increase in January)

Due to the retirement of the post holder, a vacancy has arisen for a Voluntary Services Officer to organise the recruitment and activities of volunteers in this large Psychiatric Sector. The post requires someone with experience and knowledge of the voluntary sector. The Sector has an extensive rehabilitation and recreation service, supported by voluntary help. The successful applicant should have a knowledge of services for the mentally ill.

Interested applicants are invited to contact the Sector Administrator for further details.

Application forms and job description obtainable from: **Sector Personnel Officer, Prestwich Hospital, Bury New Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 7BL.** Tel. **061-773 9121 ext. 154.**

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms **18 January 1980.**

POST OFFICE ENGINEERING UNION RESEARCH OFFICER

Applications are invited for the post of Research Officer to take charge of the Union's Research Department. Candidates should have good academic qualifications combined with a keen interest in, and, if possible, experience of the work of the trade union movement.

The salary range is £9,426 to £9,994 plus an Outer London Weighting Allowance of £445 and the successful candidate would enter at a point appropriate to age and experience. There is a contributory pension scheme. All applications will be treated as confidential. Existing staff will be considered.

Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from the General Secretary, Post Office Engineering Union, Greystoke House, 150 Brunswick Road, Ealing, London W5 1AW. The closing date for the receipt of completed application forms is 31st January 1980.

WORLD FEDERATION OF UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATIONS (WFUNA)

Secretary-General

WFUNA, a Non-Governmental Organisation with Consultative Status, Category I, with ECOSOC invites applications for the post of Secretary-General by 1 February 1980. Salary negotiable.

Further details from **WFUNA, c/o Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.**

Programme Coordinator

required by CIIR to administer its existing volunteer programme in **NORTH YEMEN** and evaluate small-scale community development projects. Previous middle-eastern experience and/or experience in this field in third world or United Kingdom an advantage. Couples wishing to work on a job sharing basis welcome to apply.

Post is on volunteer terms. Accommodation, living and other allowances are provided. Intensive language training. Applications should be made in writing to: **CIIR (Overseas Volunteers), 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1. Tel. 01-487 4397.**

BRITISH ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION

requires an

Organising Assistant

in its

Theatre Department

To work in a Harley Street Office. Commencing salary: £3,500 per annum rising to £3,900. (Salary presently under review), plus £2.25 luncheon vouchers per week. Please apply for application form and further details from: **Mrs Anne Wymer, 8 Harley Street, London W1N 2AB. (01-637 9311).**

All applications should be returned to the Equity Office by no later than **FRIDAY 18 JANUARY.**

CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU, COMMUNITY SERVICE,

140 Ladbroke Grove, W10.

SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

required for busy office, working on community projects with the Caribbean Community. Full range of Secretarial Skills needed, including responsibility for minutes; Salary scale AP2.

Application forms from: GLCABS, 31 Wellington Street, WC2. Tel: 379 6841. Closing date 18 JANUARY.

STELLA FISHER BUREAU: Secretarial skills are in demand. Be well placed by Stella Fisher whether graduate, 'A', 'O' level or mature TOPS retrainer. Introductions to Publishers, Social Welfare Bodies, the Media as well as to Commerce, the Professions and the Arts. Stella Fisher Bureau (Emp. Agy), 110 Strand, London WC2. 01-836 6644. (Opp. Strand Palace Hotel). Please ring for Sat. a.m. appts.

WE ALWAYS HAVE interesting vacancies for graduates and 'A' level students, with accurate typing and office skills to work in non-commercial and educational organisations. Phone Mrs Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy.), 92 Brompton Rd (opp. Harrods) SW3 1EH. 01-589 0590.

Personal

HUMAN RIGHTS volunteers required to comment upon applications to European Commission. Box 7279.

FREELANCE RESEARCHER with knowledge of French, German and Italian. Also typing and typesetting service. 01-737 3426.

AUTHORS INVITED SUBMIT MSS, all types (including poems) for book publication. Reasonable terms. Stockwell Ltd, Ilfracombe. (Established 1898).

ARE YOU an intellectual fun-loving person? 18-80 years old? The Progressive League caters for mind, body and spirit — politics, music, creative writing, poetry, dancing, philosophy. Ring 452 8358.

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A 'SONSY' YOUNG WOMAN needed by artist (43), Bristol area. Box 7321.

GOOD CLASS Gentleman (mature), West London, quiet tastes, non-smoker, wishes to meet tallish, attractive female, status immaterial, for friendship. Box 7368.

WARM, ATTRACTIVE infants' teacher, 44, with two Grammar school daughters and lovely mid-Kent country cottage, seeks tall, prof. gentleman, to make her family's life complete. Box 7360.

AUBURN HAIRED, slim divorcée, 40, Herts — still looking for tallish, unattached prof./executive, loving and kind, wanting a permanent relationship and great new year. Box 7336.

'EVERYBODY NEEDS SOMEBODY sometime'. Status gives you a better chance to meet your kind of people. Contact London's premier Marriage/Friendship Service for unattached professional people. 'Status', 88 Marylebone High St, W1. 286 2128 (24 hrs)

THE JANE AUSTEN BUREAU — Introductions in all age groups immediately available. Free details from Brosnan House, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, or call 44661.

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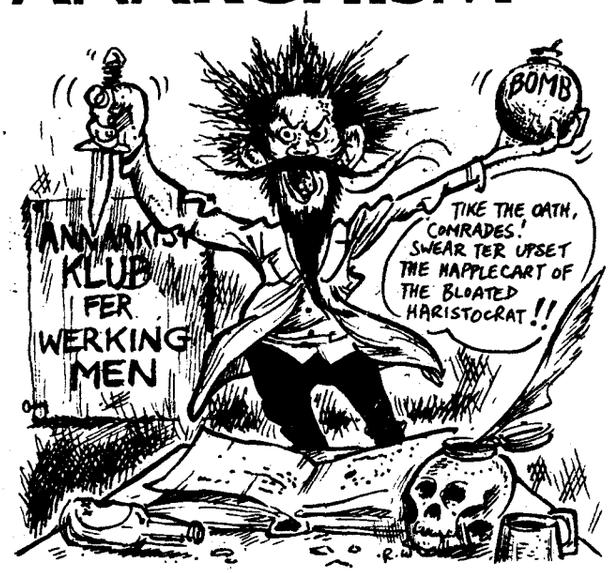

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